

THE  
T R I B U N E,  
A PERIODICAL PUBLICATION,  
CONSISTING CHIEFLY OF THE  
POLITICAL LECTURES

OF

J. THELWALL.

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TAKEN IN SHORT-HAND BY W. RAMSEY, AND REVISED BY  
THE LECTURER.

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VOL. II.

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"If my Lectures had been of that seditious and treasonable complexion  
"which they have described, it must have been easy to have checked me in my  
"career, and brought me to punishment, without putting a gag upon the  
"nation at large, and annihilating the boasted liberties of the country."

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1796.



THE

# THE BRITISH

A PERIODICAL



POLITICAL ECONOMY

J. THORNTON

TAKEN IN ENGLAND BY W. H. R. AND PUBLISHED BY J. THORNTON

VOL. II

AND THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY  
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## P R E F A C E.

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**A**S little alteration has taken place in the conduct of this Volume, except what was announced in the Advertisement in the First Number, it would have been perfectly superfluous to trouble the reader with further Preface or Introduction, if the singular circumstances under which I am placed, and the malignant calumny to which I have been exposed did not call upon me for some animadversion. To the slanderous aspersions, however, of certain political leaders I shall not deign any particular answer. Men, whose traffic is corruption, and whose stock in trade forgery and misrepresentation, however high in rank, or dignified by office, are beneath the serious attention of an individual whose rank is his integrity, and whose office the propagation of principles conducive to the general happiness of mankind. To enter the lists on the score of character with such men, were degradation; and to suppose that their assertions have so much credit with mankind as to require elaborate refutation would be an insult to the understanding of the country.

It is sufficient therefore to observe, that their own conduct gives them **THE LIE DIRECT**: for if my Lectures, delivered upon the average of last

fealon to an audience of 430, and upon the average of this season of 520 persons, one night with another, had been of that seditious and treasonable complexion which they have described, it must have been easy to have checked me in my career, and brought me to punishment, without putting a gag upon the nation at large, and annihilating the boasted liberties of the country. But they knew that my Lectures were not treasonable; they knew that they were not seditious; and they knew that they were therefore the more formidable. They would have been glad to have made them appear such, no doubt: and they have an ingenious train of spies and informers, with memories as convenient as those of their employers: but these were of no use—for I had a short-hand writer, and my *real* language and sentiments were therefore capable of proof. Therefore it was that the *existing laws were inadequate to THEIR purposes*; therefore it was that even Lord Grenville's new-fangled treason and sedition bill would not suffice. They know that when perseverance and honesty are opposed to powerful corruption, and when men of any intelligence are embarked in the public cause, so long as they are permitted to speak at all, they will find some means, even under the most severe, ambiguous, and iniquitous laws to publish such truths, and propagate such sentiments, as will ultimately be fatal to their oppressors, without exposing themselves to the condemnation of an honest jury.

Therefore it is, that after proclaiming that this shall be treason, and that shall be transportation, another law is framed to make it felony and death to speak, or even to meet, at all, but under such restrictions as are totally inimical to the independent spirit of Britons, and subversive of the provisions of the Bill of Rights.

If



If there are any persons so obstinate in their prejudices as to suppose that these arguments are not conclusive as to the base manner in which, for sinister purposes, my doctrines have been misrepresented, let them appeal to the evidence of these Volumes, which, unlike the Reports of Secret Committees, shall contain no garbled accounts, no false colourings, no sophistical glossaries or misrepresentations, but shall continue to be published, in regular weekly numbers, till the whole of my Lectures are before the public, with such revisions only of style and composition as the short-hand transcripts of extempore effusions must of necessity require.

But I have been assailed from another point. In the midst of that storm which the malice and the terrors of ministerial corruption had raised around me, calumny and foul misrepresentation have been poured upon my head from a quarter, where, at such a time, and under such circumstances, it was least to have been expected. Not that I mean to insinuate, that the author of the pamphlet alluded to [*Considerations on Lord Grenville's and Mr. Pitt's Bills; by a Lover of Order*] was ever an approver of the Lectures. The visionary peculiarities of mind, which, in the midst of all its daring excellencies, mark the "Enquiry concerning Political Justice," cannot have escaped the observation of the attentive reader; and in the midst of the singularities with which that valuable work abounds, nothing is perhaps more remarkable than that it should at once recommend the most extensive plan of freedom and innovation ever discussed by any writer in the English language, and reprobate every measure from which even the most moderate reform can rationally be expected.

I knew from this singular work—I knew, also, from the frequent friendly conversations I have

enjoyed with the author, that he was hostile to every species of popular association; and it is but justice to observe, that he has frequently endeavoured to dissuade me from continuing my Lectures, by arguments, strong and convincing I suppose to him, though to me they appeared visionary and futile.

But I little expected the malignancy of a public attack, at a time when, even if such an attack had been merited, no possible advantage could accrue to the public; when the doors of my Lecture Room were on the very eve of being closed by the strong arm of *authority*; and when of course, the only effect such conduct could produce, was to inflame the prejudices already so artfully excited against an individual, whose only crime was having vindicated, in an age of persecution and arbitrary usurpation, that Liberty of Speech which for more than a century has been considered as the distinguishing birthright and peculiar privilege of Britons.

But if an attack, at such a season, from such a quarter, was matter of surprise, how was my astonishment increased at the extravagance and fury of that attack? What was my astonishment when I saw the man, whose private professions of esteem for the powers of my mind, and the purity of my motives, had so frequently increased my confidence, and roused the honest ambition of my soul, stand forward to accuse me at the bar of the public as "an impatient and headlong reformer," who made it his occupation to stir up "all the malignant emotions of the human mind," and bring the passions of the audience "into training" for revengeful destruction, and lamp-post massacres? What was my astonishment when I heard this friend, this philosopher, this transcendent pattern of candour and moderation, whose liberality can find an excuse for the most sanguinary clauses in Lord Grenville's bill,



bill, treat those doctrines of general humanity and benevolence, so incessantly enforced in these Lectures as "*saving clauses*,"—compare me to "Lord George Gordon preaching peace to the rioters in Westminster Hall;" and finally, by way of climax, assimilate me to the villainous hypocrite Iago, who after practising every artifice to awaken and to inflame the groundless suspicions of Othello, shelters himself from the suspicions of the abused and deluded Moor by advising him "not to dishonour himself by giving harbour to a thought of jealousy."

These passages, malignant enough in themselves, become more insufferable from the recollection that the writer of them, not very long ago, reprobated another person in strong terms, for seeming, in a distant way,, and in a private circle, to hint something like the charge of duplicity which they so strongly and so *publicly* contain. What signify, after this, the "*saving clauses*," (to hurl back the contemptible charge in the teeth of its inventor) of talents "arrested in their growth," and *original* "purity of intentions."

That my talents, be they great or small, have not been *arrested*, the growing reputation of my Lectures, and the *class* of auditors by which they have *lately* been attended, is sufficient evidence; and a comparison of my present with my former public actions will put the matter beyond dispute. And as for my intentions, if my principles are not at this time sound and good, it is of no consequence how *pure* they were when I "commenced my career;" since, on this side of the question at least, the world will regard, as it ought, not what a man was but what he is.

I have the consolation, however, to find that the prejudices excited against me, except in a very narrow and interested circle, have declined, in proportion



portion as the notoriety of my conduct and my principles have increased. In short, if ministers had not found, that the longer my Lectures continued—that is to say, the more opportunities people of all descriptions had to hear and judge for themselves, the more general the conviction became of the propriety of my sentiments and the justice of my cause, they would never have thought it necessary to adopt such strong measures for the purpose of shutting my mouth. But it was necessary for the argument of the “ Lover of Order,” to represent the system of political lecturing as inimical alike to genius and principle. I am not therefore, surprised that he should persuade himself that my “ talents had been arrested in their growth,” and that the “ uncommon purity of my intentions,” had degenerated into the designing villainy of Iago. But as for the latter I know my own heart. I know also that the world will one day do it justice. And as for the former, though I am aware how common it is for authors to “ lay the flattering unction to their souls,” yet Mr. *Godwin* must excuse me if I bow not with implicit reverence to an opinion of which the success of my undertaking is so far from furnishing the evidence.

But let us examine a little the objections of this singular writer, to the system of political lecturing in general; since, as in all probability, the time is not very distant when my lectures will be resumed, this is the most important part of my subject: and if it should be found, as I believe it will, that these objections are chiefly without foundation, that if admitted they would go to restrict the wide diffusion of all science, and that the few that have any sort of validity, are more than counterbalanced by the important advantages which can no otherwise be so certainly obtained, *the Public*  
will

*will have more reason than I can have, to deprecate the attempts that have been made to rob them of this species of entertainment and instruction.*

“Whether or no Political Lectures, upon the “fundamental principles of politics, to be delivered “to a mixed and crowded audience,” says the *Lover of Order*, “be entitled to the approbation of an “enlightened Statesman, it is somewhat difficult to “pronounce.”---Difficult to pronounce whether a mixed and crowded audience ought to be instructed upon the fundamental principles of a science upon which the happiness of that general mass, from which a mixed and crowded audience must be composed, more than all other sciences depends!—Genius of common sense and honesty! if the great mass of mankind—the mixed multitude, of which society at large, as well as the generality of crowded audiences, is composed, are not to be regarded as the mere dupes and instruments of a few political professors, what can be so important as to generalise, by the most expeditious means, those maxims and principles by which the science of politics can be rendered most subservient to its great end—the interest and happiness of the whole? But “It is not,” continues the author, “for the most part, in “crowded audiences, that truth is successfully investigated, and the principles of science luminously “conceived.” Perhaps this is true: particularly with respect to the latter part. But is it in crowded audiences—is it in his Tribune that the Lecturer conceives his principles, or investigates his subject? It is there indeed that he propounds the one and illustrates the other: but if he ~~has~~ any regard either to his duty or to his fame, nay, if he expects, for any continuance, even that poor popularity which consists in the applauses of a promiscuous audience, however illiterate and ill-judging, *the mere delivery* of

*have /*  
8



*of his Lectures* will constitute the smallest part of his labours: his principles will be conceived, his subject digested, and his materials arranged in the silence and solitude of the closet; and every hour of his life, every scene he beholds, and every circumstance that occurs will furnish matter, which his observation will be perpetually seizing, and his reflection applying to the important object of his investigation.

There are some advantages which debate undoubtedly possess over the system of lecturing: It is more probable that both sides of the question should be fairly stated in open debate than in individual animadversion: misrepresentation is more easily detected, and falsehood more readily exposed\*. But the advantages of lecturing are much more numerous and important. The sentiments delivered by the professor are never of necessity the transient dictates of the moment, conceived in the warmth of passion and debate, and provoked by the desire of conquest. His temptations to pervert facts for the sake of argument are much less powerful than those of the debater; he is not so frequently obliged to bring forward his conceptions in so crude a state; and that he has the means of more lucid arrangement, and of compressing a greater body of information into his discourse, and thus combining together the advantages of elaborate research and popular enthusiasm, must be evident to the candid enquirer.

If I am asked what assurance we have that he will use these advantages? I answer that he must either make use of them to a considerable degree,

\* When the Lectures are afterwards published, as in the instance under consideration, even this objection is obviated; and the Lecturer lies completely open to refutation.



or else his popularity will be so short-lived, that his errors can be of small importance to society. His reputation is not to be supported with the same facility as that of the popular debater. He has no casual variety to depend upon; no alluring expectations of new faces and new names to hold out to the public; no contradiction to rouse him, no rival to stimulate, and *no foil to set him off!* Every thing depends upon his own diligence and exertions; his situation is so conspicuous as to submit him to an ordeal of uncommon severity; and if he does not give to his discourse a variety and solidity which nothing but great industry, an independent originality of mind, and a mass of well-digested principles can furnish, no charm of voice, no elegance of person, no grace of action or, flow of modulated periods (if he were fortunate enough to possess all these advantages) can support his popularity through a dozen lectures.

But, perhaps, I may be told that the objections of my antagonist relate not to the lecturer, but to the audience. But even in this point of view, the argument is as futile as in the other; and if indeed it were of any validity, it would apply as forcibly against every other species of lecturing as against political lectures: for two hundred raw pupils from the country, and I have seen more in the lecture-room of Mr. Cline, are as effectually a crowd, aye and a *mixed* crowd, as five or six hundred. Every *successful* professor, of whatever art or science, delivers his lectures, even on subjects the most abstruse, to a mixed and crowded audience; and the teacher of anatomy, of chemistry, or of politics, however confident of his own powers would equally betray his ignorance, if he expected that the crowd of students who attend his discourses, will either successfully investigate or luminously conceive the

principles of his science in the theatre where they are assembled. It is quite enough if the attention is so far roused and the memory so far impressed as to furnish the materials of that reflection from which, and which alone any real solidity of judgment can result.

The lecturer, generally speaking, can expect no other immediate effect than to fix conviction where it was dubiously entertained, to *shake* the prejudices hostile to his system, and so far to interest the imagination as to compel a large part, at least, of his auditory to revolve his arguments in their minds till their truth or falsehood shall be rendered evident. He must consider himself, in short, not so much as the reaper who goes into the field to collect the harvest of opinion, as the sower, whose business it is to scatter the seed; and though *part* of this seed must be expected, from the perverseness of the soil, to fail of taking sufficient root, yet, if he performs his task with judgment, the harvest, though distant, perhaps, is certain. Nor are these objections applicable only to "Theatres and halls of assembly;" they must be extended also to the conversations that pass "in the domestic tranquillity of the fire side:" for it is not in conversations or debates, whether of the select few or the mixed multitude, that solid opinions are formed: these must undoubtedly be digested in the solitude of the closet. But, in defiance of all the folios and quartos that were ever written, the closet would be as fruitless as the tomb, if it were not for the materials that debate and conversation furnish. It is by conversation that the mind is quickened and the obstinacy of dogmatic confidence softened: it is in "mixed and crowded audiences"—"in theatres and halls of assembly," that the real lover of his species must principally expect to inspire that generous sympathy

thy—that *social ardor*, without which a nation is but a populous wilderness, and the *philosopher* himself only a walking index of obsolete laws and dead-lettered institutes. I wish not to bear too hard upon my opponent: the literary and political world has obligations to him which I hope will not be soon forgotten: but let any man compare together the terms of friendship and reciprocal esteem upon which, for the last two or three years, we have lived, and the *time*, circumstances, and complexion of this attack, and then judge whether I am guilty of illiberality when I appeal to this very pamphlet as a proof how great and how dangerous a tendency the life of domestic solitude led by this singular man, and his scrupulous avoidance of all popular intercourse has to deaden the best sympathies of nature, and encourage a selfish and personal vanity, which the recluse philosopher first mistakes for principle, and then sacrifices it to every feeling of private, and sometimes of public justice? for what milder construction can possibly be put upon the first twenty-two pages of his pamphlet, and upon those passages in particular which relate to my Lecture, than that the author, in his extreme anxiety for the reputation of candour\*, overlooked every consideration of justice to a friend assailed by all the persecuting bitterness of powerful malice? Supposing the Lectures had been as pernicious as the “*Lover of Order*” represents them, what good end could he at such a time propose by his invectives? They

\* The reader will judge how justly the claim of candour is supported by hunting for dishonourable motives, for doctrines “*persuading men to unbounded and universal benevolence,*” (p. 21.) when promulgated by one party, and finding excuses (p. 45.) for the most tyrannical clauses in measures brought forward by another.



were about to be closed as it appeared for ever. The minister had clapped the ponderous key of his authority in the door: and the whole strength of his irresistible majority was exerted to turn the massive wards, whose bolts, it was supposed, were to lock me up in silence and obscurity for ever! Was this a time for a philosopher and a friend to choose for his attack? Was this a time for *candour* to swell the torrent of prejudice which interested calumny had poured upon my head? and by such passages, such unfounded misrepresentations, as this pamphlet contains, to prejudice the moderate and inflame the irritated against a man whom the minister had so evidently devoted to destruction?

It is not, however true, that there was any foundation for considering my Lectures in that point of view in which this "Lover of Order" has placed them: and the perusal of these volumes will prove my assertion. They are not farragoes of personal invective: they are neither "adapted to ripen men for purposes similar to those of the Jacobin Society of Paris," nor to bring the passions of the audience into training for lamp-post massacres. In short, they were not the lectures of "an impatient and headlong reformer;" and, in proof of this, I need only appeal to the fact, that my warmest and most numerous friends will be found among those firm but moderate advocates of liberty who join enthusiasm of principle with the sacred love of peace and order; and that the bitterest of my enemies may be found alike among those bigoted aristocrats, whose prejudices have prevented them from ever hearing me, and the sanguinary and infuriated, perhaps *hired*, advocates of violence and commotion.

To

To sum up all: I felt as the " Lover of Order," himself expresses it, that to accomplish a peaceful and effectual reform, " There must be a consent of " wills, that no minister and no monopolist would " be frantic enough to withstand;" and I was not *frantic enough*, though the " Lover of Order" is, to suppose that this *consent of wills*---this " magnificent harmony, expanding itself through the whole " community," was to be produced by writing quarto volumes, and conversing with a few speculative philosophers by the fire side.

I therefore endeavoured to give my Lectures the form most conducive to general attraction. But though the form was for this reason popular and miscellaneous, and though I had not always time for the most accurate and scientific arrangement, I flatter myself that, to the attentive reader, these Lectures will appear to be, not the loose declamations of an impetuous demagogue, but in reality " Lectures on the Fundamental Principles of Politics": and that the Lectures of the present season in particular, will be admitted to contain a connected series of well-founded and digested facts, the proper investigation and application of which are absolutely essential to every friend of reform who wishes really to know what are the miseries and corruptions that call for redress, and the means by which that redress is to be procured.

Hence it will be found, though I have varied my titles as much as possible, that the public might not be led to suppose, that I was repeating the same lecture again and again, that the discourse of each successive night, till the introduction of the two obnoxious Bills, rose, in tolerably exact progression from the facts and principles of the preceding, so as to form one regular and connected treatise: an  
advan-

advantage which will undoubtedly be felt much more sensibly by the reader than the hearer, but which, even to the casual attendant, was not without its uses, as it occasioned every individual lecture to be, in reality, better digested and arranged.



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# THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XVI.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

*The ensuing Volumes of this work will contain nothing but the Lectures; except, perhaps, an occasional article of poetry, to fill a page that would otherwise be blank. A whole Lecture will be given in each number, for the sake of greater convenience to the reader, and uniformity in the publication. This, it is obvious, will occasion the numbers to vary, in the quantity they contain, and in the consequent expence of printing: an article which, from various circumstances, is constantly growing upon every publisher. Profit, however, is not the object of this publication; and if it pays the expences of the printer, and shorthand writer, the author is satisfied: since a very wide circulation (and such it has hitherto had) is necessary even for that. The numbers, therefore, of the common edition, fluctuating from two half-sheets to three, will continue to be sold at three-pence. When they considerably exceed that they must be liable to a consequent advance. The numbers of the fine edition will continue invariably to be sold at six-pence each.*

*Aldermore, 13th July, 1795.*

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*The PRESENT WAR a principal cause of the  
STARVING CONDITION of the PEOPLE.*

*—The first Lecture “On the causes of the Dear-  
“ness and Scarcity of Provisions;” delivered by  
J. THELWALL, Wednesday, April 29th, 1795.*

CITIZENS,

**M**Y feelings are peculiarly gratified to find so thronged an attendance when a subject like the present is held out for investigation; because at the first view it must appear to be one of those which do not promise as large a proportion of amusement, as many other topics might lead you to expect. Your

No. XVI.

B

attend.



attendance therefore shews the deep anxiety you feel for the attainment of information; and I am sure a subject equally important with the present cannot frequently be selected for your attention. I know hardly any interest of humanity that is not involved in the enquiry. I know hardly any branch of political knowledge that is not necessary for the complete and thorough investigation; nor any individual subject that would require so large a proportion of time and attention to do it justice; or so much ingenuity and precision to place the facts it involves in a proper point of view; and it is ~~not~~ not the ostentation of false modesty, which compels me to say, that I am well assured, I do not come before you properly qualified to do it justice. If I should, however, in some degree awaken the attention of the audience, and through their means of the country at large, to the serious consideration of the subject, and a fearless enquiry into the *real* sources of the calamity, I shall have effected a very grand part of my object. And I am convinced that it is the duty of every individual, as far as lies in his power, to labour for the benefit of the human species, by dragging forth to public view every fact which industry and opportunity can put him in possession of, relative to circumstances which embrace so large a proportion of their happiness and prosperity.

There will arise considerable difficulties, however, in the investigation. If I should confine myself simply to facts and arguments, I am aware that a large portion of my audience would not only be disappointed, but from not being in the habits of abstract speculation, would fail of receiving that information which, as far as I have the power, I wish to give them. I am aware, also, on the other hand, that if I run too much into popular declamation, or give the reins too much to fancy, the great object which stimulates me to enter into the enquiry would be lost. Facts would not be brought to your minds with sufficient interest and simplicity; and instead of giving you that light which should guide to happiness, I might only produce that heat which by leading to turbulence, would be injurious to society.

I shall attempt, however, as much as I can, to steer a middle course, and without disdaining to rouse attention by occasional appeals to your feelings and imagination, I shall endeavour by the closest reasoning which hasty preparation enables me to command, to force my way to the conviction of your  
better

better judgments. By such a combination *I believe* the best effects are to be produced: But *I am sure* of this—that if I should be able to accomplish this purpose to the utmost of my wishes, I should do the most dangerous thing for my own personal security and peace that any individual, barring projects of violence and commotion, could undertake. For the facts involved in this enquiry are so monstrous, the abuses of government, and those who have the administration of government, so enormous, the scandalous practices and proceedings with which the understandings of mankind have so long been imposed upon, while so large a portion of the people have been reduced to beggary, are so dreadful, that a man who should successfully state them to the public, will be in eternal danger—from those men at whose interests he must strike; and if he escapes the traps and pitfalls of perverted law, he ought to wear a helmet on his head and a coat of mail upon his breast, to preserve him from assassination.

I am however too far pledged to the public to retreat from the path of public duty. After the situations in which I have stood, after the malice that has been directed against me, I cannot retire from the theatre of public action without betraying and injuring the cause I am embarked in, more than I have yet been able to do it good. I shall therefore put aside all personal considerations, and proceed to the investigation of my subject: nor shall I be prevented by any considerations from doing all the justice in my power, to the truths which I mean to bring before you.

I warn you however before hand, that small indeed will be the proportion of light which I can throw upon the subject, compared to what might be thrown upon it, by proper time and attention. Yet though I can do but little, it will be no excuse for me if I neglect doing the little that I can.

The enormous increase of the price of provisions must be so evident to the most casual observer, that it is not necessary to enter into any declamation upon the simple circumstance of that increase. If however we take into consideration the facts of former history, and compare together the state of human society, in this country, in former periods and at the present time, the increase will come swelling upon our view in a proportion so monstrous, that credulity will be staggered; and I should not venture to state the facts to you, if I had not *aristocratic authority* upon which those facts can be established.



When we learn that, 230 years ago, *a chicken was sold for a penny, and a hen for two-pence*, and that now a fowl is not to be purchased in the London market for less than five shillings, we are struck with wonder, and are led immediately to enquire how comes this monstrous increase in the price of provisions?

The philosopher perhaps will immediately appeal to theoretical reasoning, and tell you of the immense increase of the quantity of circulating specie—he tells you, and he tells you truly, that the mines of Peru have been constantly working; that the bowels of the earth have been rent in every quarter of the globe, in order to drag the hidden stores to the eye of day; and that hence results a rapid decrease of the value of money. He tells you, also, that in this country, in particular, the pompous use of furniture made of precious metals has very much declined, that this furniture has, also, got into circulation, and that hence arises another decrease of the value of money. He tells you, also, that the state of society is such that the circulating medium passes with greater facility from hand to hand, and that in consequence of that quick circulation he can adduce an additional reason for the increased price of the necessaries and luxuries of life—or in other words for the decreased value of money.

All this is true. But let us see *how far* this will carry us. It will show us, it is true, that a pound in money now is not as much as a pound in money formerly was. And perhaps, if we trace the matter farther back, we shall find another reason, for the increase of the *nominal value* of commodities; namely, that the weight of that coin which bears the same nominal value, at this time, is not so great as it was at the periods when that nominal value was fixed.

From the first of the Norman Sovereigns of this country to the present times, we may trace a gradual diminution of the value of money: I mean to say in the weight of it. Originally a pound weight of silver was coined into no more than 20 shillings; and hence 20 shillings are called a pound at this very day; although we know very well that 20 shillings are ~~not~~ a pound weight of silver, at this time, but that, on the contrary, 60s. are now coined out of that quantity. This makes however nothing to my present argument, as by far the larger proportion, and if Bishop Fleetwood may be considered as an authority, the whole of this decrease in the weight of money had taken place before the reign of Queen Elizabeth,



Elizabeth, from whom I date the calculations I am about to make. For that Prelate in his very precise and laborious chronology of the fluctuations in the standard and value of money, makes the sterling coin of Queen Elizabeth, correspondent with the standard of the present day.

Let us see then how far these facts will account for the increased price of provisions: for if it is really true, that the sole causes of this increased price are the increase of circulating cash, and the variations of the standard of money, then the condition of the lower orders of society, and of all orders, ought to be precisely the same as before: because, it being the money that has declined, and not the articles of consumption that have advanced in value, the consequence is, that no other difference has actually taken place, than an increased incumbrance in the quantity of money that you are to take to market with you to purchase the articles you want.

A little enquiry, however, will teach us how very small a proportion of the swollen price of provisions is to be attributed to these causes—for at the very time of which I have been speaking to you, while depicting the very moderate price of several articles of consumption, the common price of manual labour was 8d. a day. You will therefore immediately see that there is no sort of proportion between the increase of the price of manual labour and the increase of the price of provisions, during that 230 years which has thus passed away, sweeping, if I may so express myself, in their flight, every comfort and enjoyment from the cheerless tables of the industrious poor.

As I told you before, I have aristocratic authority for these facts. Mr. *Hume* has never yet been suspected of Jacobinism; yet Mr. *Hume*, in the 3d Appendix to his History of England, (vol. 8, page 346, of *Cadell's* small edition, for I think it right to be very particular in my quotations) states it as a fact, upon the authority of an ancient author, that between 1550 and 1560 "a pig or a goose was sold for 4d. a good capon was sold for 3d. a chicken for 1d. and a hen for 2d.: and yet," continues this author, who wrote at the very period relative to which he speaks, "at this time the wages of a common labourer was 8d. per day." Now supposing that the prices of other things were equally low, according to the present ratio, we find that *the wages of a single day would have bought the poor labourer a fat pig, a loaf of bread, and some good ale to drink for himself and his family.*

But

But consider, I pray you, how many days a poor labourer must work before he must touch either ale or fat pig in the present situation of affairs. For my own part, I do not see why a poor labourer (without whom, by the way, we should none of us have either ale, nor pigs, nor bread, nor any thing else) should not occasionally have his pig to banquet upon, and his pot of ale after it to refresh himself. But alas! these things are now entirely out of the question; and if a man has three or four children, his ordinary wages will not even buy a sufficiency of bread alone: for what is the present price of wages? I believe we may estimate them at about sixteen pence per day throughout the country; and I am in possession of facts enough to prove, that for ordinary labour, that is to say, for eleven months out of twelve, this is the outside. Now the price of a half peck loaf, which for such a family is not too much, is twenty-pence. Such are the blessings of our Constitution in Church and State as now administered.

But suppose we take the estimate from London, where the price of labour is considerably higher. The great part of labouring men employed in this capital receive from twenty-pence to two shillings a day: (Some particular trades, among whom combination is easy, have by a sort of insurrection and violence, extorted more!) But what is the price of a pig or goose now. I never go to market, Citizens, and therefore am obliged to report these circumstances at second-hand; but I am told that a good pig or goose at this time will cost about *seven shillings* instead of *four-pence*; that a capon instead of *three-pence* is *six shillings*; and that fowls, instead of a penny and two-pence, are about four shillings and six-pence, at the lowest.

Now taking the average of the increase from these facts; supposing, for the present, that the increase of other articles has been proportionate, the present price of provisions is about twenty-two times—Mark the fact, Citizens—the price of provisions is multiplied by about twenty-two, from what it was at the period I have been speaking of. Well, are the wages of the labouring poor increased in a proportion of 22 to one? If instead of this, they are scarcely doubled, let us mark in what a very different situation the lower orders of society are placed, from what they were in the golden days of Queen Bess as they are called.—(Golden they might be, to the poor, in this respect: but I cannot help putting in my  
caveat



caveat as to the general praise bestowed upon the reign of that despotic termagant).

If the price of labour had kept pace with the growing price of pigs and of poultry, the wages of a labouring man would have been at this time not less than *fifteen shillings per day*.

Now Citizens, if these are facts, and if it is also true that no master could possibly afford to give his labourers fifteen shillings per day, I am entitled to draw this conclusion—that the increase of the price of provisions does not principally result from the decrease of the value of money, from the larger quantity of circulating specie, or from any of those causes which mock philosophers have appealed to, in order to gratify the tyrants who paid them for varnishing over their oppressions, and deluding the people who listened to their fallacious arguments.

Citizens this is not all. I have some reason to believe that, at the time I am now speaking of, the usual day's labour of a working man, instead of twelve or fourteen hours, was but eight. I will tell you my reason for supposing this. I know it to be the fact, that, in a particular part of the country, it was but eight hours at that time; and you will judge how far it is likely that this was an exclusive privilege.

About three years ago, being on the coast of Kent, and taking up my habitation at a friend's house, at Dinchurch wall, which keeps out the sea from Romney Marsh; and being at the house of one of the principal members of the corporation by which that district has the misfortune to be governed, I had an opportunity of learning some particulars relative to their regulations. By the charter of this corporation, which was granted, I understand, about the time I have been speaking of, the price of the day's labour, for a man working upon the wall, which stands in need of constant repair, is fixed at a shilling.

This will shew you that at that period 8d. per diem was the average price, and not the maximum of the price paid for labour, for the price of a day's labour, upon Dinchurch wall, for keeping out the sea from Romney Marsh, was fixed by charter at 1s. Being fixed by charter, it remains the same at this time, and the Corporation itself has not the power of altering it. But the day's labour upon this wall being originally only eight hours, the poor labourers, finding themselves no longer able to live twenty-four hours upon one day's work, perform



perform regularly a day and an half's work every day: that is to say, they toil twelve hours for which they receive 1s. 6d. for the support of themselves and families.

This is only an individual instance I grant; and therefore does not authorize a very positive conclusion; but as it has led me to suspect, that the day's labour was anciently no more than eight hours, I state the foundation upon which the suspicion rests, in hopes that others may think it worth while to enquire further into the subject. It is certainly worth enquiry; and for my own part, whether it was the general practice or not, I am thoroughly convinced that it is more than enough for the interests and happiness of society; and more than enough to be put upon the individual. Nor can I give unqualified praise to the laws of any country, that does not enable a poor man to maintain his family in decency by the diurnal labour of eight hours.

Nay Citizens, if—which I believe never can be the case, and therefore I don't wish to enforce it upon you as a thing practicable—but if an equal division of labour among all the inhabitants of this island, and if the luxuries, the follies, and fopperies of life were banished, even one hour per diem to each individual would be labour enough for the comfortable subsistence of all. Nay I am informed, that Mr. *Nicholson*, a chymist and philosopher, whose very name commands our reverence, has absolutely calculated, that the whole labour employed in producing the absolute necessities of life, when divided equally among the whole population of the country, is not more than *half an hour* in the day.

Now though I think it a very good thing, that some of the *embellishments*, as well as the NECESSARIES of life, should be attended to, though I think it a very good thing that a country should be adorned with splendid edifices, magnificent paintings, books to inform the mind, and diversions and indulgences to relax and soften it—that we should have articles of ease and gratification, as well as the bare accommodations of life; yet I do not think it right to grind the faces of the poor upon the mill-stone of oppression, that a few worthless individuals may arrogate to themselves the individual possession of all those comforts and advantages.

Citizens, when I am thoroughly aware of the applications that may be made of what I am saying, which I could wish always to be, and how far the inferences will go which I attempt to draw from the facts I am stating, I am very desirous that

that I should never appear to draw a conclusion beyond that point in which the facts, fairly and candidly stated, will bear me out. I ought therefore to observe, that, with respect to the former conclusion upon the prices of provisions, there is some degree of fallacy, and that when this fallacy is fairly stated, it must be admitted to operate as a drawback in some degree, with respect to the disproportion between the prices of provision and of labour; and consequently that the depression of the lower orders of society is *not quite so extravagant* as it might, in the first instance, appear. I wish to put you in possession of all the facts that I am master of; and I shall not therefore be very much afraid of appearing to contradict in one part of my lecture what I advance in another.

I leave ungenerous advantages to the wrong side of the question. Our cause stands not in need of them. I wish to submit the whole of the reasonings, pro and con, fairly and candidly, that you may see how much and how little the facts I bring before you bear upon the conclusions I wish to adduce.

Some abatement then is to be made from the calculation drawn from poultry and other articles of that description, because the fact is, that it was not, originally, so much as it is now, the practice of a few particular individuals of the privileged and opulent orders of society to monopolize to themselves a particular species of food. Luxuries did not always bear a price so disproportionate to the necessities of life as they do now. There was a time when salmon (for example) and all luxurious fish were so plentiful and abundant, that the poorest individual in society as well as the richest, could have them upon their tables, and banquet upon them to satiety.

I had an opportunity to mention to you once before, that it was found necessary, at Winchester, to insert a clause in the indentures of poor boys apprenticed from the parish, to prevent them from being fed more than three times in the week upon salmon. But means have since been taken to preclude the necessity of such clauses. It was known by the great and mighty potentates who dance before us in the puppet show of state, adorned with stars and garters—It was known (I was going to say by these mountebanks but I mean by these *right honourable gentlemen*, that luxuries were adapted to pamper their appetites, and fill them with the sinful lusts of the flesh, and thereby corrupt their morals and render them



but little disposed to go to church, and still less disposed to listen to every thing that the gentleman in the black gown should say to them, and finally to render them unfit for labour, and destroy their constitutions. These *Right Honourable Gentlemen*, therefore, with respect to many of those articles, were willing to engross the dangerous enjoyment to themselves, knowing very well that their own morals could not be made much worse, and that if they did eat and drink themselves to death, it was matter of very little consequence to society. Salmon was therefore contracted for by their agents of luxury, the great fishmongers; and agreements were notoriously made that only a given number should be brought to market, and the rest, let them be as plentiful as they would, should serve to manure the earth. Other practices (particularly the breaking up of small farms) have tended to increase the price of pigs and poultry: it being found improper for the swinish multitude to have such food—there being something monstrous in the idea of one pig eating another.

These circumstances have caused a great disproportion between the prices of those articles and of the articles of common food: much greater within the remembrance of some persons perhaps to whom I am now speaking, than it used to be. But suppose we take the general difference in the price of provisions at the most moderate calculation possible: suppose we should admit, for the present, that the price of these articles was no more at the period I am speaking of than the price of common butcher's meat: suppose for example at the same time that a chicken was to be bought for a penny, meat was a penny per pound; what shall we then find the proportion to be? Meat a penny a pound, and labour eightpence per day. *The price of a day's labour, then, at that period, at the lowest computation, was equal to the price of eight pounds of butcher's meat.* Is that the case now?

If this is the lowest calculation that can be admitted, then, certainly, whatever the result is, as to the difference between the proportionate prices of labour and provisions then, and the proportionate prices of labour and provisions now, we shall be compelled to admit that such difference does now exist between the condition of the laborious part of the community then and now.

Well then to make the price of labour at this period equal in point of real advantage to the price of labour at that period,—that is to say, to enable a man for the same quantum  
of



of labour to get the same quantity of comforts and accommodations, the average price of labour ought to be 5s. 4d. per diem throughout the country.

Let me be understood accurately. I do not mean to set myself up as the arbitrary judge of what ought to be, and what ought not to be, the price of labour. That is not what I am aiming at. I want to convince you of the nature and causes of the evil; and then let the good sense and understanding of the country seek for its remedy. Whether the proper remedy is to remove the causes of the extravagant price of provisions, or to raise the wages of labour, or whether both ought in some degree to be done, I do not at present decide: But I think I am entitled from this statement to draw this conclusion—that there is a monstrous advance upon the prices of the necessaries and accommodations of life; the whole of which cannot be attributed to the decrease of the real value of the money by which these articles are bought. I think I am entitled, also, to conclude—that either one or other of these two circumstances is the fact—either the quantity of money has been constantly increasing, and the prices of provisions have consequently kept equal pace with that increase, while the higher orders of society have monopolized the increasing money and all the consequent advantages to themselves, so that the lower orders of society, by whom the whole was produced, have not been proportionably rewarded; or else there is an increase in the price of the articles of consumption, disproportionate to an extravagant degree, with the increase of the specie by which those provisions is to be purchased.

I believe, Citizens, both these statements are true. I believe, from causes which I shall afterwards investigate, that the price of the necessaries of life has increased beyond the increase of the circulating medium: I mean the *general circulating medium*. I shall speak of *that swindling bubble called paper credit*, at another part of these Lectures. I believe, also, that there has been a neglect of the lower orders of society; and that the increase of their wages has not borne any sort of proportion with the real *increase of the quantity*, and consequent *decrease of the value* of money.

But let us bring the comparison a little nearer to us. Let us take facts of more recent date: and see what we are enabled to conclude from them.

I shall now proceed to statements to the accuracy of which (if they are accurate) a great proportion of you will be able

to bear testimony; or the fallacy of which (if they are false) you will readily detect:—facts relative to the prices of provisions within the last twenty-five years. I shall then compare these prices with the increase of the price of labour; and see how far the lower orders of the people have been benefited even during that period, for a great part of which the growth of wealth, commerce and prosperity have been so frequently boasted, by that treacherous individual, who has all the while had his dagger at the heart of every blessing, and every comfort and accommodation of the country.

Twenty years ago bread was four-pence per quartern, now it is nine-pence farthing. [*I understand that in London it has since risen to a shilling.*]

Nay this increase, monstrous as it is, has another aggravating circumstance—namely, that many of those vegetables which used to decrease the consumption of bread, are now scarcely to be got at any price whatever. Potatoes which, since I have been a housekeeper, used commonly to be sold at five pounds for two-pence, are now three half-pence per pound. This circumstance may appear trifling and ridiculous to some of us: but it is no trifle, it is no ridicule to the poor individual who has five or six children to support; and who hitherto has been able to give them but little sustenance, but what was derived from these potatoes, sopped in a little of that chalk and water which in London we call milk.

But these are not the only articles which have thus increased in their price. We talk of famine in France. We have a worse famine at home. They have had no scarcity but of bread alone. We, it seems, have a scarcity of every thing. No kind of *meat*, in any part of that country, has ever been more than four-pence per pound. What is the case with us? Boiling beef, twenty or twenty-five years ago, might be bought at from two-pence to two-pence halfpenny: now from six-pence to six-pence halfpenny; roasting ditto at four-pence now at eight-pence; pork and veal at four-pence halfpenny, now at eight-pence halfpenny; mutton three-pence halfpenny and four-pence now eight-pence; for good salt butter that used to be bought at five-pence we now pay eleven-pence; loaf sugar, (good aristocratic loaf sugar) such as you must now pay thirteen or fourteen-pence per pound for, was then sold at sixpence; as for the cheap sort of loaf sugar, as it is called, for which you pay eleven-pence or a shilling, at this time, it is such coarse democratic stuff as no individual,



dual, at the period I am speaking of, would have bought at any price whatever. Moist sugar (a very important article to poor people, who wish to keep their children in health by regaling them frequently with a fruit pudding) used to be two-pence halfpenny per pound, it is now nine-pence. Coals, till within these seven years, were scarcely ever so high as a shilling per bushel. They have been three shillings and three shillings and sixpence, during the late inclement season; and twenty-pence was no uncommon price the winter before. What is the result of all this?—That coals have increased their price threefold, common sugar almost fourfold, butter and bread considerably more than double; some meats have increased threefold in their price, and the average of all animal food is considerably more than double the price now that it was twenty or twenty five years ago. Now then supposing we could admit that all this increase of price resulted from the increase of gold and silver, from the wealth, and grandeur, and splendour, and prosperity of the country—and Mr. Dundas having told you that *general bankruptcy is a proof of the prosperity of the country*, may perhaps be able to prove to you, that the increased price of provisions is a proof of the grandeur, prosperity, and happiness of the country: But, if this be true, what justice has been done to those millions of our fellow citizens, from whose labour, from whose industry, from the sweat of whose brow, all that wealth and prosperity has been reaped? Ought not this wealth, grandeur, and prosperity, to have enabled the labourer who procured them, at least to eat as well, drink as well, cloath himself as well, lay on as good a bed, and be sheltered by: good a roof as formerly?

For the accomplishment of this, the price of labour ought to be considerably more than doubled. It has not, however, upon an average, from one end of the country to the other, been increased during that period one fourth. In some places it has scarcely been increased at all; and, in many, not one sixth. Mark then the blessed effects of the martial administrations of *North* and *Pitt*; two characters that will go hand in hand down to infamy; the one for the sordid and pusillanimous cowardice with which he suffered himself to be made the chief tool and instrument of a war he never approved, the other for his savage propensity to the destruction of the human race, and the unfeeling duplicity with which he has pursued his ambitious views. But why do I put epithets to the word? Hypocrisy itself includes every thing that is detestable and abhorred;



abhorred; and wherever you find that scowling countenance, that shuffling gait, that lapsed arrogance of deportment which marks the political maypole of this devoted country, set down the being thus stamped by the broad seal of nature, for all that the catalogue of guilt contains, from solitary intoxication and debauchery, to the ravage of nations and the depopulation of continents, and the most inveterate hatred to the liberties and happiness of mankind.

Thus, then, we find that the labourers of this country, at this time possess considerably less than half the necessities, comforts, and accommodations, which they were able to obtain twenty or twenty-five years ago, and less than a third of what recompensed the same or a less degree of labour in the middle of last century: while at the same time, the pensions, places, and luxuries of our rulers have been extravagantly increased. The wealth, the power, the insolence of successive administrations, have kept pace with the growing misery of the people; and while one are stripped of half their necessities, the others are insulting common sense and common decency, with the pompous display of more than twice their former opulence and wasteful grandeur. Yet *aristocrats* have the shameless audacity to tell us, that if the price of the necessities of life has increased, the price of labour has increased also.

It is a courtly virtue to lie with the words of truth; and therefore I give them credit for their consistency. The price of labour has indeed increased from eight-pence to a shilling, and from a shilling to fifteen-pence, while the necessities of life have risen at a proportion of from eight-pence to two shillings, and from two shillings to five.

Such then are the facts with respect to the usual articles of common accommodation. But there are other articles which, though not immediately consumed by man, have also a tendency to increase his misery, when they are increased in their price. Hay, for example, and indeed every individual article that bears any price whatever. What then are the facts relative to those articles. Have they increased in price, or have they not? Within five years, from the year 1790, oats have increased 75 per cent. in price.

I believe I state this fact from such authority, that I do not stand in danger of any contradiction. I am not myself an adept in the market price of these articles, or in the commerce that is carried on relative to them: but I believe I can state from the best authority, that since the year 1790, the price

price of oats has increased 75 per cent. while hay, every article of pulse, and a great variety of those articles which contribute, in a second-hand way, to the comforts of life, have kept pace with this increase.

What then shall we say to all these facts?—Is it necessary, or is it not, that the causes should be enquired into? I believe it is necessary: for whatever may be the case with respect to theological matters, with respect to political concerns, I believe it is virtue to know good from evil. I believe, that we ought to pluck the apple of science whenever it hangs within our reach. I am sure, also, that if it is good to enquire, it is necessary that the people should make the enquiry for themselves: for I do not believe the ministry will be inclined to make it for them. At this period indeed they have better employment abroad. Their wits and faculties are too much engaged in showing how consistent it is for them to talk of the faithlessness of republicans, by persuading the Royalists of La Vendee to break thro' all the oaths and engagements they have made with the republic of France. They are too busy in sending their 50,000 stand of arms, with their scoundrel run-away emigrant officers, to excite fresh insurrections—fresh scenes of blood and massacre, among the ignorant priest ridden peasants of Poictou;—in arming afresh the Chouan banditti—the midnight murderers of Brittany, that they may have the pretence of something like a shadow of a shadow of the shadow of a probability of success, upon the strength of which, to persuade the people of Britain to be gulled, once more to spend another forty millions in a fresh campaign; and to have the honour of finding themselves in a worse situation at the end than ever.

However this gives me no uneasiness: for things at the worst must surely mend; and our rulers seem determined that it shall not be long before they drive matters to the very worst that human nature is capable of bearing. But say these *virtuous men*, and their *most sapient advocates*, it is not right to enter into enquiries of this kind, at this time. Consider the state of the public mind. It will lead to commotion. Such is the trick and cheat which they have been putting upon our understandings, and perhaps upon their own, for centuries; such have been always the pretences of the individuals who have walked the same infamous round before them, and such always will be the pretences of those who follow in the same routine. The *delinquents* will always think it is not a proper time to enquire into the state of their delinquency.

But



But the fact is, that commotions spring from ignorance, and not from knowledge. He who is wise knows how to redress the grievances he labours under. He who is ignorant feels the sting of disaster: but, instead of taking the path of amelioration, plunges headlong into violence. Men ignorant and uninstructed become mad and frantic with their wrongs: for what is madness? What is phrenzy; but the want of knowledge and capacity to understand right from wrong, truth from falsehood, and to perceive which is the way to accomplish those designs which wisdom, justice, and virtue would dictate.

I wish to allay, not to increase fermentation. I wish I knew how to give you a *Spartan determination of soul*, together with the benevolence and philanthropy with which a few speculative philosophers of the present day have endeavoured to inspire mankind. I would make you hard as rocks, against the assaults of corruption, prejudice and oppression. I would make you stand like a marble wall, and defy the assaults and encroachments of those wretches who dare to set a foot upon the sacred boundary and landmark of liberty. But, at the same time I would fill your souls with a detestation of every thing like violence, rancour, and cruelty. O that I could make you feel the true determination of generous valour, and that you might be as wise and benevolent as you were determined and resolute!

How is it to be done? How shall I steel your breasts, and soften your hearts at the same moment? If I knew how to do this I should then indeed be fit to stand in this Tribune, and listened to by my fellow citizens; because I should then be able to point out to you the certain means of redress, and insure you success in your struggles for the happiness of future ages, without aggravating, even for an hour, the misery of the present generation.

I am sure, however, that this effect is not to be produced by intimidation or by ignorance. I have seen, since I last had the honour of meeting the countenances of my enlightened fellow citizens in this place; I have seen some of the lamentable consequences of the miserable ignorance, in which the governors of this country contrive to keep the people. I have been rambling, according to my wonted practice, in the true democratic way, on foot, from village to village, from pleasant hill to barren heath, recreating my mind with the beauties, and with the deformities of nature. I have traced over many a barren track of land in that county (Surrey) which



which is called the Gentleman's county; because, forsooth the beggarly *sans culottes* are routed out from it; their vulgar cottages, so offensive to the proud eye of luxury, are exterminated, and nothing but the stately domes of useless grandeur present themselves to our eyes. I have been travelling over those spots; I have enjoyed the fine prospects from Leith hill; and have turned round, with a sigh, to behold how many a little uncultivated valley there lies waste; how many a beautiful spot lies desolate, which a thousandth part of that revenue which has been so madly wasted in the present detestable war, might have converted into smiling gardens and luxuriant fields, yielding food and raiment to many a poor family, while their little smiling cottages might have imparted delight, where now nothing but gloomy sterility is to be seen.

In the course of these rambles I have dropped, occasionally, into the little hedge ale-houses to refresh myself. I have sat down among the rough clowns, whose tattered garments were soiled with their rustic labours; for I have not forgot that all mankind are equally my brethren; and I love to see the labourer in his ragged coat—that is I love the labourer: I am sorry his coat is obliged to be so ragged. I love the labourer then, in his ragged coat, as well as I love the Peer in his ermine; perhaps better; for indeed I should not be sorry if the ermine of the Peer were employed in keeping the children of the poor ragged-coated peasant warm of a winter's night. I have mixed, therefore, with these people; and I have grieved to hear their sentiments. Commotion and violence they can readily commend. They can applaud the frantic proceedings of those, who have seized upon the shambles, the mills, and the bakers' shops; and thus have endeavoured, by their arbitrary proceedings, to reduce the price of provisions. Thus far they think the interference of the people right: But as to political enquiry, to this they are too many of them dead. The generality of them still cherish the prejudices that have caused their misery. They hate a Frenchman, for being a Jacobin, as much as they formerly hated him for wearing *wooden shoes*, tho' they know no more of the meaning of the word *Jacobin*, than they did before of the guilt that was attached to shoes of wood. Nay too many of them idolize the name of a contemptible wretch whose father's reputation was the sole cause of his popularity, and whom a few grains of enquiry would lead them to execrate as the author of that very scarcity of which they complain. I

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have argued with these men upon the impropriety of tumult and violence: for I abhor commotion more than I abhor any thing, except despotism and corruption; and I never meet with the advocate of violence, but I endeavour to show him its wickedness and absurdity. But, alas, the uninformed mass love this violence. They uphold the propriety of it, because they are ignorant of the real sources of their calamities; because they do not know that the miller, the baker, and the butcher, against whom their violence is directed, are as much oppressed as themselves; and that they must look higher if they would find the real instruments of their oppression; that they must think more deeply, if they would learn the means by which that oppression is to be removed.

The fact is, as I shall shew you in the course of this enquiry, that though the causes are multifarious indeed, that have produced this oppression, the greater portion of them is to be traced to the errors, to the vices, to the selfish usurpations of those ministers, and their predecessors, who think that no man has rights who was not wrapped in a swaddling band of ermine, and that no man can be entitled to reason, unless he has, either in possession or expectation, a bit of blue ribbon, or a few gold and silver spangles embroidered on his night-gown.

There can be no doubt that the advocates of administration must be anxious enough to prevent enquiry; because enquiry must point out who are the causes of the wrong; and what is the mode by which redress is to be obtained. There is no doubt that tumult and violence are pleasant things to them; because they give them pretences for giving additional force to the arm of authority, and for drawing tighter those reins of government, which, though the poor may bleed at the mouth while the gag presses hard upon them, it is pleasant enough for those who only drive, and whip, and spur them, to be holding with a hard hand. They, therefore, have little objection to the butcher, the baker, or the miller being sacrificed to the ignorant indignation of the people, provided thereby they avert the dreaded calamity of calm enquiry, and shun the light of political truth, which brings conviction to the minds of the people, and threatens, by the unanimous sentiment of virtue and justice which it might inspire, to drive them and their crimes from the seat of power. This they must abhor; because whenever that unanimous sentiment of common sense and justice shall prevail among mankind, down drops the curtain upon the mighty puppets of the day; the



the wires they have been moved by, will no longer make them perform their evolutions, and Punchinello and his family strut in their embroidered robes no more.

Citizens, the field of enquiry that opens before me is immense. The present subject involves almost every question connected with finance; it involves the consideration of that delusion which has been so long upheld, paper credit; it involves the system of taxation; it involves the present mode of partitioning land into farms and tenements; it involves the scandalous neglect which has occasioned one third of the land in this island, (taking England, Scotland and Wales, together) to remain in an uncultivated state.

On the succeeding evening I shall give you the facts stated by the committee of the board of agriculture, and prove to you that one third of the lands of this country absolutely lie waste. What a scandal to the government of the country! What a shame that pensions, places, and emoluments so immense, should be wasted upon a few worthless individuals, while so large a portion of the country lies useless, which, with a tythe of that money, might be converted into regions of plenty and population!

The despotism of China would blush at such absurdity. Go there; behold the population thick almost as the bearded grain that grows upon the cultivated ground. Behold every street swarming with human beings. What is the reason, that even in the midst of despotism the human species can thus be multiplied? They have no pernicious system of paper credit; they have no monopolized system of external commerce; they have no monopoly of lands into the hands of a few holders; they are not year after year, and month after month, turning the little tenant out of his farm, to throw a huge province almost into one concern, and on the speculative mercantile trafficker in land bestow that which might produce the comfortable support of numerous families, and tend thereby to the happiness and prosperity of the country.

It is not my intention to enter into the whole of this wide field on the present evening. I shall confine my observations during the remainder of this Lecture to a few particular points, which are immediately connected with the abuses of government, and with those circumstances that press particularly upon the present moment.

There are undoubtedly circumstances which have occasioned a gradual increase in the price of articles of the first necessity, in this country; there are other circumstances



which have tended to produce an absolute scarcity, not only in England, but in Europe.

Among those which have tended to increase the price of provisions we may reckon the enormous growth of corruption among the higher orders of society; by which the expences of government have been greatly increased. We are to consider, also, among the causes of permanent evil, the restrictions upon the exportation and the importation of corn; and we are to consider, also, a burden rendered venerable by its antiquity, but whose grey hairs can no longer preserve it from contempt, I mean the oppressive burthen of tithes, and a great variety of other causes, which shall be enumerated in their turn. The part, however, which I shall particularly dwell upon this evening, is that which relates to the present war, and which, as all other wars in some degree, but the present more than any former, has occasioned a considerable increase of the price of provisions, independent of taxation, independent of the additional burdens which encumber traffic—as the increase of freightage and insurance, and the like.

The former of these is paid upon all articles of consumption, which are removed from one part of the coast to another; and therefore corn, coals, and other articles which are of home consumption, as well as sugar and articles of foreign produce, partake of the consequent increase of price.

Now, Citizens, I shall state a few facts relative to an individual article, which will shew you, by analagous reasoning, how considerable an increase in the price of the necessaries of life must have been produced by the present war, by the operation of these two species of burthen alone. The freightage of sugars was only four shillings per hundred weight before the war, now it is ten shillings; the insurance upon the same article, which used to be six pounds per cent. is now increased to sixteen.

You will please to remember, that the increase of freightage arises from so many individuals who used to be employed in commercial navigation, being pressed on board our men of war, to be cut to pieces and destroyed for the glory and honour of William Pitt and Co. Such is the price which one half of the community pays for having the other half cut and blown to pieces in ridiculous wars!

With respect to the increase of the insurance, that is to be attributed to the activity of the enemy. For as they sometimes take the liberty of sweetening their tea with the sugar we have paid for, the under-writers of course must take a  
greater

greater premium before they can insure the respective cargoes. And by the way it should be observed, that these gentlemen under-writers do not fail to take advantage of these circumstances. War is a sort of harvest moon to these legal gamblers; so much so, that I remember, at the close of the American war, hearing one of them lament that hostilities were over so soon—for, that if they had continued a year or two longer, he should have feathered his nest completely.

Citizens, I do not mean to contend, that the freightage and insurance of all articles have increased in the same proportion; but this will show you how to account for one part of the increase of the price of the necessaries of life resulting from the present war. In short, there is a thousand ways in which it affects them, besides the wholesale accumulation of taxation, and the obvious inconveniences of decaying manufactures and stagnated commerce.

See, then, the advantages of going to war, to those whose destiny it is to survive at home; as to those poor beings who had their heads knocked off abroad, according to Mr. *Burke*, they are gone to receive their reward; and therefore he might tell you the faster our brothers and friends have their heads knocked off the better, because they are going so much the faster to heaven. And as he had the honour of being educated among the Jesuits at *St. Omer's*, I am sure I shall not contend points of religion with him. But admitting this to be the case, there can be no doubt that heaven has been very well peopled by the triumphs of the present war; the last campaign particularly, the exploits of which it is unnecessary to enumerate: and, indeed, it would put one out of breath, as it did the French, to follow them from field of glory to field of glory—from the frontiers of France to the marshes of Flanders, and from the marshes of Flanders to the dykes of Holland, and from the dykes of Holland to the devil knows where.—It would be impossible to enumerate the achievements which will immortalize the name of the British *Frederic*, and cause posterity to go down upon their knees and bless the wise heads of *Pitt*, of *Jenkinson* and *Loughborough*, and all the sapient projectors of this most glorious, salutary, and triumphant war. Paying a little more for the sugar to sweeten our tea, or drinking it without, or having a plumb-pudding or pye or two the less every week, are trifles in comparison with the permanent advantages reaped from undertakings so wise, and exploits so glorious.

There is another thing has produced an increase of the price of all necessaries to be shipped from one part of the country



country to another, namely, the embargo laid upon our merchandize, in order to enable Mr. *Pitt* to get more sailors to fight *his* battles for him.

But there are, in the present war, circumstances of peculiar aggravation, which it seems our state politicians could not calculate.

It was boasted by that great teacher of the Rule of Three, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that we should have for our allies all the powers of Europe. It was well answered by his powerful opponent in the House of Commons (much more powerful he would be still, if he would shake off the trammels of party!)—It was well answered by him, that the greater our alliances, the greater our calamities; because the consequence was, that all Europe being engaged in war, no port would be left open, no place would be neutral, and therefore the greater would be the stagnation both in our external and internal commerce.

But he might have gone further; he might have said, not only our commerce is stagnated, but the very sources of subsistence are dried up, in consequence of this grand alliance. All Europe is at war. Your own produce, scarcely ever sufficient for your own support, is now to be sent in large quantities to the continent, to supply all the armies of all the despots of Europe. Stripped, as you will be, of every necessary article of life, where is the neutral nation that is to supply you? What corn will you get from any of the powers on the right or on the left bank of the Rhine? What supplies will you draw from any of those places from which you used to have them? None.—You have plunged all Europe into war; all Europe, of course, must neglect the cultivation and tillage of its land; all Europe must lose the opportunity of supplying you with the necessary articles which your profligacy will destroy.—Where then are you to seek, in the midst of those blessed victories which you anticipate (how well they have been fulfilled we have since seen)—where are you to seek for food to sustain the soldiery who are to fight your battles abroad, and to feed the poor manufacturers who will be languishing in disease and want at home?—Will you expect it from America!—from America, who, if she has one grain of justice or common sense, must love the cause of your enemy, and abhor your's?—America, who must regard every success you may happen to obtain, as a signal of alarm to her independence?—America, who must regard your violation of treaties, on the banks of the *Miami*, as a bone of contention



contention purposely preserved, to furnish you with a sorry pretence, if ever you should think yourselves strong enough, once more to attack her, and attempt her subjugation?—According to this calculation has been the event. Hence neither wheat nor any other grain has been imported since the last harvest, except oats, and very small quantities even of these; most of them from Ireland; very few, indeed, from Hamburgh.

This accounts for the rise of 75 *per cent.* in the price of that article, which has been mentioned before. The very great supplies of oats, which used to be sent through the ports of Holland from various parts of the continent, have entirely ceased.

The states also, on both sides of the Rhine, the Austrians, and the united Netherlands, have either neglected their tillage, or what little they have produced has fallen, not into the hands of Britain, but into the hands of Britain's enemy.—Your allies have left half their lands unsown; and what has been the fate of that which they have cultivated? The triumphant republican, with his sword in one hand, and his sickle in the other, has reaped the harvest, and carried it into his graineries.

Let us observe, also, the conduct of our good and gracious ally the King of Prussia, that illustrious sample of the faith of monarchies, that demonstrative reasoner in favour of treating only with *regular and established governments*. Even when he pretended to be our friend: that is to say, while he showed an inclination to receive our money; for he never showed any inclination to do any thing else for us, but to lighten us a little of that of which he saw we had so much as to make us proud! —Seeing that taking a great deal of it away would bring the people to their senses, he very kindly helped the Minister off with it. But even during the time that he was receiving this money, he absolutely prohibited the exportation of corn to any nation whatever.

Now, whether in reality he was afraid that this corn should fall into the hands of the French, or whether he was afraid there would be a scarcity in his own country, it matters not with respect to my argument. Suffice it to say, that it being known to our wise Minister that he had forbid the exportation of corn, yet our wise Minister thought proper to pay for a quantity of that article; hoping, I suppose, to be able, by weighty arguments, to persuade the King of Prussia, after he had paid for it, to let him have it. And now we may find, perhaps,

perhaps, that the eloquence of the French Convention is more powerful in Prussia, than the eloquence of Britain:—that Court having been a long time studying the French language, tho' I have not yet heard, that any English grammarian has been sent for to instruct them in ours. One part of the English language, however, the King of Prussia understands very perfectly: that which I mean is generally written in characters of the brightest yellow, and which is considered in our senate, as composing the most solid, weighty, and persuasive part of eloquence. The ornamental part of rhetoric, however, he imports from another country; and to these, (as there are some reasons to doubt the soundness of his royal capacity) he may chance to be most attached.

But there is a still more important circumstance to be taken into consideration; namely the exportation to the armies. This is not easily calculated; because I am credibly informed, that, in many instances, what with the shifting of ground, retreating from place to place—for, you know, we have been gravely told in the ministerial papers, that, “ notwithstanding their successes, the French have never been able to take possession of any ground, till the British troops had first of all removed from it.” thereby demonstrating a well known physical proposition, that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time.—Well then, what with the bodies of the English armies moving first from one spot and then from another, and the bodies of the French moving on to them; what with sometimes burning the corn and sometimes drowning it, that it might not fall into the hands of the enemy; what with its sometimes actually falling into those hands, it has been known that the orders of the Commissaries have sometimes been three times executed, before the stores have actually arrived at the army for which they were intended. So that even the powerful genius of *Brook Watson* has sunk beneath the weighty duties, and still more weighty profits of his office; and he is said to have exclaimed in despair, that it was impossible to supply a flying army.

Here then is waste for you. Here is a source of aggravated scarcity. The waste and consumption of a camp is always double the quantity that would provide for the same number of individuals in their own peaceful habitations: and the support of a flying army is always three times as much as an army that is successful would require.

But this is not all the wicked and mischievous policy of the present system: It adds wantonness to misfortune, and aggravates



aggravates with wilful devastation the calamities of the human race. It is reported that even so large a quantity of haystacks as would cover a whole mile and an half of ground in the neighbourhood of Rotterdam, was set on fire by the retreating English and Hanoverians, because it should not fall into the hands of the enemy.

A precious legacy this to bequeath a people whom we had forced into a war they did not wish for; and whom we were incapable of defending!

Magazines of hay having been so destroyed, do you suppose that magazines of corn and beef have not been destroyed in the same way?

O feeble sense of reason and of virtue!—O neglected spirit of justice and humanity! That any being who has capacity enough to count his fingers, or who can put down as many units upon a paper as will make ten, should ever think of plunging continents into war for the gratification of their ambition, when the consequences must be destroying, thus, by wholesale, the means of the existence of so many thousands of their fellow beings, who have the same right to the accommodations of life with themselves; but who, together with their families, are to be reduced to misery and the lingering death of famine, while mad revenge, the avarice of office, and the intoxicating love of power, stalk with inflated insolence over the globe, affect the nod of deity, and snuff the incense of human sacrifices!

Citizens, the evening is far advanced. But late as it is, there is one subject I cannot pass over without some animadversion. I mean the conduct of the Minister of this country with respect to Poland; that country whose struggles for dawning liberty warmed the heart of every generous Briton; that country to which every man who had one spark of veneration for any thing that looked like liberty in the constitution of this country, must have sincerely wished success; that country has been beaten down; its spirit has been annihilated; its population thinned by massacres perpetrated by the *regular Government* of Russia; every spark of liberty has been trampled out; the Hyæna of the North, and the vultures of Germany, have torn its mangled limbs; have feasted on its gore; and have been supplied, by British gold, with the means of this destruction and inhuman partition.

This conduct will shew you, that it is not Jacobinism only, that is hateful to the present minister;—that it is not republicanism only that he detests; that he is a worshipper of un-



qualified despotism; that he wishes to establish it throughout the world; and that even the most temperate and moderate reformation; even the merest half-way attempt towards liberty and the amelioration of the condition of the human species, is sufficient to set his gall afloat, and provoke him to glut his appetite for blood.

Look at the history of the attempted revolution in Poland. Were there any appearances of Jacobinism there? Did they set up for that liberty and equality which has been so misrepresented? No: if they had they would have triumphed; and *Pitt*, and the despots of Europe would have been disappointed. But they were too moderate in their views to warm the souls of the great body of the people; too little careful of the rights of the mass of mankind, to awake the glowing enthusiasm which liberty and equality inspires. They could not unite in one effort the congregated energies of the nation: but the congregated despots and cabinets of Europe were united against them. For their destruction hard British gold was sent over to the Despot of Prussia, in subsidies.

What use did he openly make of it? Did he assist the alliance against France? No. Did he not, in the most barefaced manner, apply that money to the destruction of Poland? and did not *Pitt* still continue to send the money of this country to that Despot, even after he saw the use that he made of it? And was he not thereby enabled to hold out against the vigorous exertion of the Poles, till the Hyæna of the north was ready to pour her Barbarians upon them, and to repeat the *massacres of Ismael* in the *streets of Warsaw*.

Yes, this tiger in human shape, this royal savage, is one of the allies with whom our virtuous administration thinks a free people ought to coalesce, for the destruction of republicanism in France, and for the restoration of the despotism of the Capets, and the contemptible superstition of his holiness the pope.

But it may be said, "he was deceived. He was so busy with his calculations, with his arithmetical plans and schemes, that he could not attend to what was doing upon such a spot of the continent as Poland; that he knew nothing of the exertions made by those brave people; and but little of the attempts made by the tyrants of Europe against them." But no—he has abjured all such excuses: with that matchless effrontery which nothing but a *William Pitt*, backed by *Henry Dundas*, could possibly assume, he steps forward

forward and tells you that, "even if he could have foreseen the manner in which the subsidy paid to the King of Prussia would have been applied, he certainly would have paid it."

Here then is a direct avowal of his guilt.—I wish not for punishments; I wish for redress; but if other persons, not as philosophical in their feelings as I wish to be, should ever take it in their heads to redress the wrongs of Europe by coercion, let him take care. When the principal goes to rack, I fear he will find but little security from his plausible harrangues. Nor will it be easy, perhaps, for men of honest and ardent hearts, that wish to keep the cause of liberty unstained by wanton vengeance, to preserve such a culprit from the gripe of a severe retaliation.

Citizens, I shall dwell no longer upon the subject this evening. I have already extended this lecture to an unusual length. I shall therefore adjourn till Friday evening; leaving you for the present with this invocation. Think, I conjure you—deeply think of all the facts that can be collected relative to this subject. It is a subject in which your own happiness is involved; in which is, also, involved the happiness of your posterity; the children yet unborn may bless your patriotic activity, or reprobate your selfish sluggishness, in proportion as you exert yourselves to redress the grievances under which the nation groans. And when I invoke you to redress those grievances, I do not invoke you to deeds of cruelty and violence, I invoke you to the energies of the mind. I invoke you to trace, to the very source, the causes of your calamities. I am convinced you will find almost all those calamities to result from the total want of a representation of the people in parliament. I am convinced that you will find that the corruption, the rottenness, the profligacy which have crept into your administrations, in consequence of the want of this representation, is the genuine source of your calamities; and that *there is no redress for a nation situated as we are* (to repeat those treasonable words which were to have brought the axe of the executioner upon this neck) *there is no redress for a nation situated as we are, but from a fair, full, and free representation of the people in the Commons House of Parliament!*

## ON COMMERCE.

(FROM THE PERIPATETIC.)

COMMERCE! thou doubtful, and thou partial good!  
 'Tis true by thee we swell to Wealth and Power;  
 And Britain's name, and Britain's arts by thee  
 Are wafted to each region of the Globe,  
 Bringing, in rich return, their varied tributes  
 Of wealth and elegance, and the rare boon  
 To which, o'er all, we owe the power to soar  
 Above the brute, toward the god-like frame  
 Of heaven-pervading natures—glorious science!  
 Man's noblest privilege! But then by thee—  
 (With grief the muse records it) oft by thee  
 War, savage War! too, lifts his brazen voice,  
 To bellow hideous discord through the World;  
 To deluge guiltless realms with native blood,  
 At mad Ambition's and at Avarice' call;  
 'Gainst *human woe* to steel the *human breast*,  
 Inflame the rancour of compatriot strife,  
 And press Oppression's foot with fiercer wrath  
 On the bow'd neck of Misery's fallen race.

'Tis thine, too, Commerce, thro' thy native land  
 To pour, wide-wasting, like a deluge, round  
 The poison'd stream of Luxury, rank-polluted!  
 The monster breeding Nile of hideous vice,  
 From whose oft stagnant pools incessant spring  
 A loath'd mishapen swarm, which Nature's eye  
 Turns haggard to behold.

Thou, Commerce, too, monopolizing fiend!  
 Fatten'st a few upon the toils of all;  
 And while thy favour'd sons, in Parian domes,  
 Rival the pomp of regal splendour, lo!  
 In every town whose *charter'd insolence*  
*Barters to Britain's sons the Freeman's name*,  
 If there thy throne is fix'd, what hundreds throng  
 Each sad retreat of Wretchedness, or fill  
 The public streets with want's afflictive plaint;  
 Mourning thy fickle and capricious sway,  
 Whose endless changes, tho' the rich not feel,  
 (For Protean gold will ever find employ)  
 Oft robs the pale mechanic of his bread,  
 And dooms the pensioner of diurnal toil,  
 For half the year, perhaps, to idle want;  
 Perhaps in age to learn a new employ.



THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XVII.

THE SECOND LECTURE *on the Causes of the present*  
DEARNESS and SCARCITY of PROVISIONS,  
*delivered Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1795.*

[Many of the occasional reflections in this Lecture will not be understood, if the reader is not reminded that a known agent of the Treasury planted himself in a very conspicuous situation this evening, and made several attempts to interrupt the Lecturer.]

CITIZENS,

IN my Lecture of Wednesday evening, I began with observing the vast and evident disproportion between the increase of the price of provisions and the prices of labour. I proved to you from *Hume*, or rather from a writer quoted by *Hume* as an authority, that about 230 years ago, when the common price of labour throughout the country was eight-pence per day, ~~that~~ many of the articles of consumption were cheaper in a degree of twenty-two to one, than they are at this period. I afterwards proceeded to shew you, that, in all probability, a considerable degree of difference had taken place between the proportionate price of the luxuries of life and the mere necessaries, and that, therefore, perhaps some deduction ought to be made from this calculation. But I believe I gave you data sufficient to authorize me in the conclusion, that after all allowances of this kind, it was but a very moderate calculation indeed to suppose that, in order to have kept any pace between the increase of the price of labour and the increase of the necessary articles of consumption, (that is to say, to make the condition of the laborious part of the community precisely the same as it was 230 years ago) ~~that~~ the wages paid for labour ought to be, considering what the prices of provisions now are, between five and six shillings per day. I endeavoured to shew you, that it was not my intention absolutely to point out that such ought to be the wages at this time, but to shew you this fact—that either very great injustice has been done to the common people, with respect to the prices paid for their labour, or else a very extravagant aug-

mentation has taken place upon the necessary articles of life, inconsistent with the quantum of specie in circulation.

I might have pushed this subject a little further; and when I was enquiring what ought to have been the prices of labour in order to make the comforts and conveniences of the lower orders of society the same as they were were 230 years ago, I might, perhaps, with very great propriety, have enquired whether the condition of the lower orders of society ought not, at this period, to be considerably better than it was at that time. For if it is admitted, society has been in a rapid state of progress, if it is true that knowledge has extended to a very considerable degree, that the mechanical arts have been brought to much greater perfection, that all the different employments to which men are devoted, are now performed comparatively with much greater facility (that is to say, a greater quantum of production may be effected with the same labour and in the same time)—if all these circumstances are true, it would be, perhaps, a fair object of enquiry, whether that class of society, to whose industry and exertions we are to attribute this improvement, ought not, at least, to have had some share in the advantages resulting from it; and instead of living in a worse situation than at that time, whether they ought not to be enabled to live in a situation much more comfortable than they then did; for I cannot see what sort of justice there is in the great body of the people labouring eternally, if the whole advantage is to be monopolized by a few idle drones, placemen and pensioners, some of whom, if I were so inclined, I could point out in this assembly. I cannot perceive the justice or propriety of the great body of the people labouring and exerting themselves to increase the accommodations of society, if the whole benefit is to be seized by a few aristocratic oppressors, who are sending their spies and emissaries into every corner to catch up every word that may drop from a friend of Liberty.—Let me observe, however, that I am glad they do send such persons here, because they may chance to hear some truths that will incline them to be active and useful converts, especially if the audience treat such persons with the candour they are entitled to: for men ought not to be censured on account of the situation in which they are placed. They have frequently been the choice of unexperienced youth, frequently the choice of their parents, and frequently have been adopted from accidents in life over which they could have no command. I do not, therefore, make this observation to stimulate ungentle feelings



feelings in your hearts; those persons who frequently attend these Lectures will bear witness, that I have always been anxious to prevent any intemperance even towards the emissaries of those who have absolutely entered into conspiracies, first to knock out my brains by hired bludgeon-men, afterwards to kidnap, and send me, perhaps, as Lady Grange was sent, into the distant solitary islands of Scotland, and lastly, to carve me alive into four quarters, and stick my head upon a pole.

Pursuing, Citizens, the chain of reasoning from which I have been led into this digression by the illiberal interruptions of this man, I say, ~~that~~, perhaps, I might have been entitled to argue, that while the nobleman rides in a carriage twice as superb, while he lives in an apartment twice as splendid and convenient, the poor peasant has a right to expect, that he should live in a cottage twice as commodious, and wear twice as comfortable a cloathing for himself and family. [TREASURY RUNNER, *interrupting*—"And so he has."]

I shall show the *honourable Gentleman* who has made that reply whether it is so or not, by and by. I will state, not assertions, but facts. If Gentlemen will make <sup>such</sup> observations it must spring from their ignorance—however, ignorance is no improper qualification for a tool of Government. I will state the facts, I will tell that Gentleman, that ~~I have read history, and that~~ from the facts contained in the records of times past, and known state of the industrious orders of society, it can be proved that their situation is *three times as miserable, instead of being twice as comfortable as it was*.

I shall not, however, occupy your time by replying to the significant nods and monosyllables of one individual. It is my business to investigate this subject; and I shall investigate it upon general principles, in defiance of all the idle vermin in office, which our pockets are so incessantly picked to maintain,

I was going to add, that I might have argued, that if the liveries of a Prince are to be increased from fifty to one hundred guineas per suit, that the poor ought to have the opportunity of putting upon the legs and feet of their children twice as good stockings and shoes as they did before. Citizens, I next examined the rise of provisions and the increase of the prices of labour, within the last twenty or twenty-five years; and as these are facts, of which a larger proportion of those who heard me could judge, I think it a little curious, that



that an individual who has apparently lived thirty or forty years in the world, should attempt to contradict the conclusion from them.—For as every article of provision has more than considerably doubled in its price, and as the wages of labouring men have not increased one fourth part, I should like very much to know, from ~~some curious calculator~~, from some of the scholars into whom Mr. Pitt has flogged his arithmetic, how, with so small an increase of wages, at the time when so great an increase has taken place in the price of the necessaries of life, a man can get twice the comfort and accommodation now for fourteen or fifteen pence, that he used to get for a shilling before.

But, Citizens, when I am speaking of the increase, such as it is, of the prices of labour, I ought to animadvert upon the special care which the laws of this country, from a laudable desire to preserve the peace and harmony of society, have taken to place the lower orders entirely in a state of dependance upon those who employ them; the consequence of which is, that when any general national hardship takes place, by means of which the prices of the articles of life are always increased, but by means of which, at the same time, a quantum of labour becomes less, the master takes a convenient and snug opportunity to scotch, as they call it, the wages of the journeymen.

Many of you, I dare say, have read, and I hope such of you as have not will take an opportunity of reading, the excellent pamphlet of *Citizen Friend*, for which that admirable advocate for the cause of Liberty was so scandalously expelled the university of which he was so illustrious a member. You will remember that, in that pamphlet, he takes notice of a very affecting circumstance of this kind: Just after the war had been declared, *Citizen Friend* (for I believe he will be better pleased to be called Citizen than Reverend and Mr.) happened to follow some poor women, who had been to a market-town to take home their work; and who, as they walked along, rung in the ears of each other the doleful and angry complaint, “We are scotched 4*d.* in a shilling, on account of this war.”—I repeat not the words, but the substance.—“O!” says *Friend*, “that the voice of truth and humanity might penetrate the walls of cabinets; and that I might resound in the ears of Ministers and Princes—The labouring poor are scotched 4*d.* in a shilling, to maintain your ambitious projects and destructive wars, without common sense, common virtue, or principle of justice?”

Citizens,

Citizens, I have had some opportunities, also, of observing the dependent situation of these lower orders of society. Some years ago, before my mind had taken that strong bias in favour of political pursuits, to which it is now attached, going into the native country of my parents, I took the opportunity—being generally desirous to see as much as I could, and, not like those poor wretches condemned to the ignorant confines of the office of a Secretary of State, to know no difference between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, but what was taught me by the lying documents of spies and their employers, which it is the duty of those poor ignorant beings to copy—my employment not being of that description, I took the opportunity of seeing, as far as I could, the condition of those orders of society, about whose happiness in the country I had heard so many romantic stories, while I was an inhabitant of the town, and took my ideas of rural felicity from novels and pastorals. I beheld there poor women, doubled with age, toiling, from morning to night, over their wheels, spinning their flax and hemp; and I found that their condition was so miserable, that many of them were positively obliged to take their work once or twice a day home to the persons who employed them, in order to get the scanty pittance that was to purchase the meal by which they were to sustain their emaciated frames. [*Vide PERIPATETIC, vol. I. p. 143.*]

I was astonished, I own, at this picture of misery. I had read a good deal in poems and romances about rural felicity. I did not know that rural felicity consisted in sitting over a wheel till one is double, and getting neither comforts nor conveniencies—no, nor the necessaries of life, to sustain and prop one's declining years, by this eternal drudgery.

This made, I own, a deep impression on my mind; which, though it did not operate immediately, stimulated me to a train of enquiry, which could not fail of its ultimate effect.—I had hitherto been a high government man, a supporter of prerogatives, and an advocate for venerating the powers that be.—O! that some way could but be invented to keep mankind (all but the chosen few) in utter ignorance! Then might placemen, pensioners, and the usurping proprietors of rotten boroughs, enjoy, indeed, a golden age, and the *swinish multitude* (driven as their *swineherds* list, and slaughtered at their will) should grunt forth sedition no more!—But it will not be. Enquiry will some how or other be awakened; and, when it is awakened, the mists of delusion melt before the rising



rising sun of truth, and the midnight hags of despotism bind us in their spells no more.

I soon found myself compelled to acknowledge that, where such was the condition of so large a portion of society, all could not be right—that “there was something rotten in the state of Denmark;” and every fact which, in the progress of investigation, came under my observation, tended to confirm the opinion.

Among other abuses, I soon found that one of the causes of this calamitous situation was the unfeeling manner in which these poor beings were left to the arbitrary discretion of their employers, who took the liberty, when these poor creatures took home their work, to scotch them as they thought fit; so that, under various pretences, for every pound that was spun by the poor individual, she never got paid for above three quarters, when it came to be estimated by the masters and employers. So much was to be considered as waste, so many deductions were to be made; and the poor individuals, where they are not numerous enough to associate, have no appeal—none at least that they have any hopes from; for you know but little of Justices of the Peace, if you believe a country magistrate will listen to the complaints of a poor friendless being, against the tradesman who has arrived at opulence by his oppression.

Thus then we find, if we regard the facts which history furnishes, that the inevitable consequence must be, from the increased price of the articles consumed, and the want of a proportionate increase in the wages paid to the industrious poor, that within twenty-five years the condition of the latter has been so reduced, that they cannot obtain half the necessities of life they formerly used to obtain; while their opulent oppressors, the placemen, pensioners, and contractors of the day, enjoy more than twice the luxuries and extravagance with which they formerly debased their nature.

I have stated to you, also, that oats and barley, which, in many parts of the country, be it remembered, are used as substitutes for wheat, have still more extravagantly increased; and that oats, in particular, have increased 75 per cent. since the year 1790.

Perhaps the *honourable Clerks of the Treasury* will not be inclined to contradict this. They will have had some opportunity of knowing the truth of it.—But, Citizens, since I met you before, I have had an opportunity of getting possession of some other facts, relative to this very important part of the question.

question. I find, from a person who has been many years in a very considerable way of dealing in those articles, that twenty-seven or twenty-eight years ago, the common price of oats, in the retail market, was from 9s. to 10s. 6d. per quarter; that, till within these twelve years, 12s. was the common price, and that they were never higher than 14s.—But now, what is the price of them? Thirty-five shillings! an increase nearly four-fold, in so small a distance of time, as that which I have stated to you.

Now, remember what a very important article of consumption these are for the labouring poor in certain parts of the country. Remember, that throughout the whole of the country parts of Scotland, wheat is a luxury which the poor man never tastes; that oats, that barley, field peas, and other pulse of this description, constitute the whole sustenance of large proportions of the people there: and I could instance a poor being, of the name of Crawford, who emigrated to America on account of his miserable situation, and who has now, merely from the profits of his own manual labour, been able to take a little farm of his own, and to become a master Farmer, in his turn; but whose sole sustenance, for himself and family, while he resided in Scotland, was one meal a day of meagre potatoes; and that, in the horrors and excesses of their hunger, they gnawed the peelings and fragments for their supper, having no other sort of sustenance whatever to keep themselves from absolute starvation.

Now, Citizens, in parts of the country where this was the case, consider what must be the monstrous accumulation of their grievances, and the miserable situation of the poor, when such an accumulation has taken place upon the price of that article in particular (oats) which constitutes the most strong, the most wholesome, and the most important part of their subsistence.

So much for the increased comfort, the double accommodation, the twice as good apartments, and the twice as good raiment and food, which the common people in Scotland maintain at this time.

Such being a small, very small part, indeed, of those monstrous facts which show the blessings of a system of rotten boroughs, and the corruptions of faction, I think myself called upon, as a good Citizen (that distinction, beyond all others, which men ought to be most emulous to deserve) to stand forward and investigate, as far as I am able, the causes of the mischief under which the people groan. Yes, groan, I say; for



for many a poor, meagre, emaciated, depressed, and heart-broken wretch, in this country pays, with groans and slavery, for the pampered luxury of those, who, because they wallow in the wealth of which they have plundered the nation, think they have a right to stop the mouths of the poor, and the advocates of the poor with the gag of persecution; and, if they cannot effect that, think it right to employ their "pimps and perjurers," "Old-Bailey solicitors and the sweepings of "the stews," to disturb their investigations, misrepresent their sentiments, and deprive them of their lives.

Citizens, there is another reason why I am desirous of investigating this subject, and it is this:—That the investigation of such subjects has a tendency to prevent tumult, insurrection and confusion. How desirous some men, who call themselves friends of Government and the Constitution, are to excite such tumults, we may learn from this fact—that whenever they believe a number of persons are assembled, to enter into peaceable enquiry, they send some one or other of their agents to prevent that enquiry, and disturb the peace. Thus, the very night that I had the honor to be arrested, in this place, upon the ridiculous trump'd-up charge of High Treason, Mr. *Walsh*, the Treasury spy, absolutely told me, that he took, to the meeting at the King's Arms tavern, the great over-grown athletic Irishman, that created the riot and confusion there, and gave the Lord-Mayor a pretence for preventing in future the meetings of that peaceable assembly.

Citizens! Citizens! we know, and our enemies know—and their conduct shews that they know it—that if men will enquire, with impartiality and temper, into the causes of these calamities, they will have no occasion for turbulence; they will find that the individuals, against whom they are inclined to direct their fury, are generally as innocent and oppressed as themselves; and that it is not the *mill*, against whose machine they direct their fury—it is not the *butcher*, whose commodity they seize—it is not the *baker*, whose shop they break open and rifle,—that these are not the men who are the causes of the calamities under which they groan; that the real causes are of much too weighty a nature to be removed by turbulence. They are so serious, so fortified, so deeply rooted, that they can only be removed by the unanimous spirit of enquiry diffusing itself through the country, and awakening to unanimous effort, by a spirited, firm, and determined (but at the same time peaceable) disposition, to represent their grievances to each other, in the first instance, and then with  
one

one congregated voice to that government, which, however it may pretend to make it high treason to overawe any branch of it, will never fail to respect and reverence, as it ought, the sentiments and opinions of the people, whenever, in a firm and unanimous manner, they are thundered in their ears. It was from this conviction that I undertook the present enquiry, and you will remember that on the last evening I traced some of the causes of the evil. I endeavoured to shew you that the evil resulted from impolitic regulations and excessive exactions. I endeavoured to shew you, in part, what I conceived to be the bearing of this question upon the subject of the present war; and I traced, among other circumstances, the great increase of burthens which lays upon many commodities; the increased expence of those transactions, in which they must necessarily be engaged, before they can bring their commodities to market, and I shewed you, that these were, in many cases, increased threefold, from the drawing off of so large a number of sailors and useful labourers for the war, from the superior vigour and activity of the marine of the French republic, which while it has left to England the empty honour of gaining victories in general engagements, and boasting of the barren sovereignty of the ocean, has never failed to sweep our commerce into republican ports, which it was the duty of the administration of this country (if they had understood their duty) to have protected.

I noticed, also, as another cause, the embargo which has been laid upon all, and still continues upon a large portion, of our most essential merchandise; it is true from one or two articles it has been taken off, but the evil was done, and the effects continue to be felt. I stated that the tillage of both sides the Rhine, from which we used to be supplied with various sorts of grain, &c. had been neglected and destroyed; —that this evil had been aggravated by the prohibition of exportation from the country of our good ally of Prussia; and also the very considerable mischief which had resulted to this country, from the large exportations that have been made of all the necessary articles of consumption to the armies on the continent, which on account of the calamitous and disgraceful circumstances, in common with other machinations of our blessed and immaculate minister, have been sent three times before they reached the army for which they were intended; having fallen into the hands of the enemy, or been destroyed, sunk in the waters, or consumed in flames, to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy;



and I noticed a particular circumstance, of a whole mile and an half of hay stacks, in the neighbourhood of Rotterdam, being set on fire, in order to prevent them falling into the hands of the enemy.

Now, Citizens, those persons who have been used to hear the arithmetic of Pitt will not, I suppose, readily agree with the conclusion I shall draw from these facts: namely, that *it would have been better for this country*, that this hay and these provisions should have fallen into the hands of the enemy, than that they should have been thus destroyed.

I mean in general, Citizens, to draw my arguments in this Tribune, not from partial interest and *political expediences*, but from broad and universal principles; to consider universal justice and humanity the deep root and solid trunk from which my arguments are to sprout and my conclusions grow; and to teach you that these, and these alone, are the proper objects of your veneration. But when I speak of the measures and maxims of ministers it is impossible to talk of general principles, of philanthropy, and humanity. They have abjured all principle both by word and deed. It is a sort of watchword of alarm, which they never use but to couple it with the indefinable stigma of Jacobinism, when they want to hunt the persecuted patriot to *Botany Bay* or *the Scaffold*. I must meet them therefore upon the ground of expediency; and it is the fate of these muddy-headed oppressors, that chuse what ground they will, they must be beaten.

You will please then to remember, that every considerable destruction of the necessaries of life has a tendency to produce not only a scarcity in the individual country in which the devastation is committed, but mediately in the general stock of the universe—that is to say, in the aggregate stock of the whole of the productive countries from whence these resources spring. All the world suffers, in some degree, in point of real wealth (the wealth that consists in the quantum of real necessaries and comforts) and, to a very considerable degree, when the devastation is so monstrous as that which has been committed by this foolish, revengeful, malicious disposition—the system of mad havock and extermination upon which the present war is conducted.

Now let us attend a little while to a consideration of what is the fair and honest system of commerce: not such a system of commerce as placemen and pensioners are desirous of promoting. Remember that the fair system of commerce is this—that **whatever** one country produces more than necessary for the consumption

consumption of that country, it sends to another country that is in want of that article, in order that it may bring back some other article of necessity, or luxury, of which it stands in need.

This is the fair, the just, and rational system of commerce. And, with respect to *articles of the first necessity*, this is the system upon which commerce must inevitably be conducted. Suppose, then, as is the fact, that the whole produce of those parts of the world that have any commercial intercourse together, taking all the different articles, is pretty nearly in proportion to the whole of the necessities and consumption of all those countries. This I say is nearly the fact; and must be so: for I take it for granted, that man does not toil for the mere pleasure of toiling. He toils to produce as much as he can find a good market for; and is never disposed to produce more than he can consume himself, and turn to his advantage, by disposing of it to others. It will therefore follow that the quantity requisite to supply the demands of the civilized world, will bear a pretty general proportion to the quantity actually produced, when the whole of that produce comes (as by means of commerce it cannot fail, in effect, to come) to a general market. Now the system of commerce being, thus, a general mart for the universe, it follows of course that, with respect to my argument, it matters not whether these productive countries, having intercourse together, be three or three thousand. I will take therefore the smallest number, for the sake of simplicity and convenience. I will suppose that two countries are at war together, and that there is a third country which is in possession of abundance of necessary articles, grain for example, which it is the nature of war to render scarce, and of which, in consequence, the other two hostile countries will be in a considerable degree of want. Now what will this third country do? You may make as many treaties as you choose, to bind the merchants and government of the pacific nation; for treaties are not even packthread—they are nothing but rotten paper, or parchment at best; more feeble than Falstaff's men in buckram, which he knocked down by the half dozen at a time; they stand for nothing at all when the parties have the power of breaking them.—If you wish for a comment upon this text I refer you to the works of the present King of Prussia. Well, Citizens, the country that has corn to spare will send it to the best market, and if there are two markets in want of the commodity,



will find its interest, and will follow its interest, in sending part of its surplus to one and part to the other.

Suppose England then, that England were, at this time, the only country that felt this scarcity, the whole superfluity of other countries would, of course, find its best market here; or if the scarcity be greater here than in France, the consequence must be that those who have, would bring it to the English market, because there it would fetch the best price. But suppose you have produced a scarcity and famine in both countries, reflect, only for one moment, what must be the consequence? Will the country that has abundance of corn bring the whole of it into the English market, by which means the price would be smaller than if they had sent only half of that commodity to England, and the remainder to the market of France?

Now, I ask you, Citizens, if this is not a clear and plain demonstration that the common scarcity, produced by the profligate and abandoned system of burning, drowning, and destroying the articles of human sustenance, is an aggravation, instead of a mitigation of your misfortunes? and that you are in reality by these means in a worse situation than if the provisions destroyed had fallen into the hands of the enemy? Mr. Pitt and his coadjutors would have sophistry enough I make no doubt to answer all this, in their own way, and to carry the question against me *in the House of Commons*: but I put it to you as plain men, understanding a plain question—Men whose calculations are not merely confined to multiplication and subtraction;—understanding also that there is such a thing as political, as well as numerical, arithmetic—calculations of the desires, wants and propensities of men, as well as treaties, compacts, plans, and cabinet projections—taking these things into consideration, (of which *Pitt*, I believe, is as ignorant as the hobby horse that he rode upon when a boy at school)—I ask you whether, in defiance of all the treaties you can make, if you produce a general scarcity, you do not produce a much worse effect upon your own population and country, than if you had produced that scarcity in your own country only, and suffer that produce (which you so ridiculously destroy) to fall into the hands of the enemy?

Thus you see that the generous, humane, and benevolent system of policy, is the best policy, at last, for the country that adopts it, as well as for others to whom it may be extended?

Citizens,

Citizens, there is another circumstance of a very curious nature, and almost as disgraceful as it is curious, which it is necessary for me to dwell upon. But disgraceful circumstances will never put the present administration to the blush; and so I need not have any tenderness for them on the occasion. I mean the conduct of the cabinet of this country with respect to neutral vessels.

There was a time when Britons had an open, manly and courageous spirit. There was a time when Britons had a sense of honor, and a feeling of benevolence; when they would have disdained to set the example of violating all the admitted laws of neutrality between nation and nation. There was a time, when the people of this country knew that neutral vessels were sacred, whatever war might exist between two contending countries. But this, Citizens, was a time when Britons disdained all weapons but those of open and manly exertion. This was a time when the detestable policy was not understood, nor could ever have been suggested, of attempting to starve twenty-four millions of brave and virtuous men, because they were struggling for their emancipation from unheard of despotism.

Yes, Citizens, there was a time when this country, upon the very eve of a war with France, freely permitted to go to that country large quantities and supplies of corn, because it was known that the rival country was in want of such assistance. I believe it is well authenticated that *George the second*, for *George the second* was a gentleman!—I say it is well authenticated, there was a time when *George the second*, actually engaged in a war with France, yet suffered a supply of wheat to be sent into that country, to prevent the people from perishing with famine.

This was glorious and magnificent conduct, worthy of a Briton! and if I had any nationality about me, it would prompt me to regret that the man who did this act was not born in the country which gave me birth.

There was also a time when the laws of nations were respected;—there was also a time when the brave and hardy Briton met his enemy face to face in the field—I mean not to stand up here as a panegyrist of slaughter, I hate massacre and murder however disguised: yet, comparing the two periods, and the two lines of conduct, I cannot but admire the man who prefers to stand openly forward in the field of combat, to the man who wishes by artificial famine to rid the world of enemies he dare not meet, because he knows his degeneracy



degeneracy of mind has sunk him below the gigantic powers of those who are struggling for freedom and justice. There is a chance that the man who meets his enemy openly in the field supposes he is right, detestable as the acts of murder must always be by which such enmity must be supported. But the wretch who attempts to starve, to poison, or assassinate, who hires perjured spies and tumultuous assassins to breed confusion in a neighbouring country, that he may charge that confusion upon those whom he has basely and insolently injured; such a man, by his detestable arts, and sneaking tricks, proves that he knows himself to be a juggler, and that his cause is as rotten as his heart is hollow.

Well, Citizens, while the generous spirit of freedom still remained, Britain respected the laws of nations: and neutral vessels went free. What has been the conduct during the present war? I shall not recapitulate the circumstances which I stated the other evening, relative to dragooning one nation and another into this mad war with the French Republic: I shall confine myself to the capture of the vessels of those nations which in defiance of the juggling and bullying cabinet of this country, have continued their neutrality. And here even the Treasury runners will not have the face to contradict me. They know the facts. They are a little more in their way. There can be no doubt, when a man begs pardon, whether he has committed the offence. And *Pitt* it is notorious has done so more than once.

He seized every neutral vessel; and brought them into the ports of this country—What has been the consequence? Whether by mismanagement or what not, even the corn seized in the first instance proved good for little upon the hands of the seizers. But the neutral countries began to see this juggling; and they began to juggle in return. They put all their rotten corn on board proper vessels, and threw them in the way of the ships of England, that they might be seized: knowing very well what sort of shallow-pated bullies they had to deal with, and that, sooner or later, they should have full indemnity for them.

Well, the ships were captured in due time; and what did they do with them? Why they sent this blessed harvest, which they had thus reaped by their system of piracy, into the granaries and storehouses in this place, and that place, and the other place; and you may know some of it by the smell, if you go along bank side in the Borough at this time. But do not mistake it for dunghills, or night carts, I pray you. It is

is the corn your governors intended you should eat. For they sent all the good corn out of the country, as fast as they could, to supply their good allies; and behold when they came to open their magazines, (having been obliged already to pay down a good price for the commodity, and make sneaking apologies, as bullies usually do, to the neutral nations they had insulted) they found precious stocks of stuff, the greatest part of which was obliged to be sold to the real swinish multitude: not to the *two legged swine*, but the real swinish multitude, who run on all fours: many of whom even had the seditious and treasonable presumption to toss up their snouts and refuse the ministerial banquet that was offered to them.

Citizens, the evil consequences of this war, and the system upon which it has been conducted, have not stopped here. We must take into consideration the injury which has been done to our own agriculture, at home; the loss of those hands by which the agriculture ought to have been promoted, by distress and misery, by emigration to America, by manning our armies, and by the laudable and excellent science of kidnapping. The individual whose plough should have furrowed the earth, and produced the smile of plenty, has been sent with his sword to gore the breasts of the friends of the human race, and spread devastation and misery throughout Europe.

If this has not produced an absolute decline of the cultivation of our farms, it has at least operated to prevent the improvement and continued increase of production, which the improved state of society would otherwise have insured. We are to recollect, that when war sounds his soul-chilling trumpet, when the shrill blast of revenge and carnage is sounding from one end of a country to another, all other concerns stagnate; commerce droops, the arts expire, science languishes, and agricultural improvement is no more: and they must be miserably ignorant indeed of the condition and state of this country, who do not know that there is room enough for improvement with respect to agriculture among us. I shall give you upon this head the best sort of authority to argue from upon such an occasion: aristocratic authority. I find by the "Report of the Committee appointed by the "Board of Agriculture, to take into consideration the state "of waste lands and common fields in this kingdom," that the whole soil of Britain is supposed to consist of about 49,436,160 acres. Now let us consider what is the quantity of this that is cultivated, and what the quantity that is waste.

We



We are informed that the waste lands in this kingdom amount to 6,259,472 acres; we are informed that the waste lands in Wales amount to 1,629,307 acres; and we find that the waste lands in Scotland amount to 14,218,222 acres; the whole together amounting to 22,107,001 acres, uncultivated; while the whole cultivated land is only 27,329,159 acres. So that there is almost half of this happy, this glorious, this wisely governed and flourishing country lies waste and uncultivated, under the influence and auspices of so blessed a constitution and so blessed an administration as we have the happiness to boast. Almost one half of one of the finest countries in the world lying positively uncultivated, and producing no one advantage hardly to man or beast! These are facts I state not from the visionary conceptions of my own brain; not from the ravings of democrats; not from the insidious inventions of Jacobins, but from the agents of government themselves, from committees appointed by their own Board of Agriculture.

Let us consider then, in the language of their own report,  
 “ what a difference would it make in the state and prosperity  
 “ of this island, were only one half of these extensive wastes  
 “ to wave with luxuriant crops of grain—be covered with  
 “ innumerable herds and flocks, or clothed with stately  
 “ timber!”

It has been objected that a large part of this waste land could not be cultivated. This objection also the Committee of the Board of Agriculture has been kind enough to remove. For it states that the lands incapable of all improvement are only one million of acres; that the lands fit to be planted are three millions of acres; that the lands fit for arable and pasture are fourteen millions; lands fit for tillage three millions; and lands capable of being converted into meadow, or water meadow, one million. So that we have eighteen millions of acres in this country, now uncultivated, which are capable of being applied to the most important uses: those uses directly connected with the subsistence and comfort of the inhabitants—We have three millions fit for timber, and which therefore would be useful, in a secondary degree, to the maintenance of the life and comfort of man; and only one million absolutely sterile; and even this one million might, perhaps, be covered with flocks of goats, which, though they yield no fleece, to increase the commerce of the country, yet afford a wholesome food, by their milk, and their flesh, while young, which would be better than for so many inhabitants of the country

to be in want of all wholesome and necessary comfort, as they are at this time. Now, Citizens, we are told from this same author, that those lands might annually produce as much provisions as would be worth 19,500,000 pounds per year; and that they would produce wood for building, firing, &c. and other uses, as much as would be worth several millions more.

Consider then, for a minute, what blessings a wise and peaceful administration of this country might have secured; by applying our resources to improvement and cultivation; and reflect what curses they have procured by the mad havock and confusion into which they have plunged us, and the rest of Europe.

Let us consider, Citizens, how many deserts might have been made to smile in fertility, by a proper application of our resources; for though it has been said, and I am much inclined to agree with it, that the inclosures which have taken place in this country, have been a great calamity; yet I am sure of this, that inclosure, upon a fair and honest principle, might be productive of the greatest advantages. For you are to remember that, in consequence of inclosure, you may have a greater height of cultivation, you may have a greater quantity of cattle, and other necessities of life, produced; that your wool is less injured and of a superior quality, and therefore more advantageous to the producer, and better for the consumer. But inclosures ought not to be conducted upon the principle that has been usual among us. The rich man ought not to have an act of parliament to rob the poor freeholder of his estate. I say the poor freeholder: for I challenge the greatest casuist of the law to produce me a better title, by which the first nobleman in the land holds his estate, than I will produce in favour of the estate which the poor man has in that right of commonage, which may have been bequeathed, or made over to him, by the nobles and great landed proprietors of former generations.

Citizens, our nobles had once some nobility. I wish not to recall to your admiration the ages of feudal barbarism; but I wish not to have the chains of feudal barbarism without any of the advantages of feudal munificence. I remember, from the pages I have turned over, accounts of the manner in which our great nobility enjoyed their revenues in former times: the hundreds and thousands of individuals supported by their bounty; their open halls of hospitality; the recreations, sports and pastimes with which they enlivened the



people, at particular periods; the bounty which they displayed towards them. But in these times they had not learned to consider it as their best grandeur to loll themselves into apoplectick diseases, in a stupid gilded coach; they thought, on the contrary, that the splendour and greatness of their nobility and fortune was best displayed by having their tenants around them, enjoying the comforts and relaxations of life, about them, at their expence. However, in other circumstances, they might be inclined to oppress those individuals, they had some degree of liberality, at least, in their conduct towards them, in these respects.

Among the most conspicuous of them, in point of this endowment, was *John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster*: for Dukes, even royal Dukes, were not always made of such stuff as they are made of in the present day! Among the foremost of those Dukes, whose liberality kept some pace with their possessions, was *John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster*, who bequeathed a great quantity of land to the poor inhabitants, in particular situations, to be held by them, and all future inhabitants of such districts, for ever.

Now I should like to know of those gentlemen who cry out about *Republicans and levellers of property*, and all this stuff and nonsense, which originated in their own distempered brains: I would ask which of them holds their estates upon a better tenure? But the greatest plunderer and oppressor always cries stop thief first; because he is desirous of creating that confusion which will prevent his own villainous practices from being detected.

What then is the system upon which inclosures are now carried on? and what ought it to be?

With respect to agriculture, two objects ought always to be kept in view: namely to produce the largest quantity of the necessaries of life that the country can produce; and to promote the most equal distribution of those articles of comfort which can peaceably and justly be effected. This is my system of equality and justice. This is my idea of the first and genuine principles of just government, with respect to agriculture—to produce the largest quantity of the necessaries of life, and to promote the most equal distribution of those articles. A little observation will shew us that the last of these, the most important, has never been attended to at all; and that the first has been attended to in a very imperfect manner: witness the waste lands I have just stated to you.

Citizens,

Citizens, the fact is, that there is a third object, which, though it ought to be no object at all, is the only object with governments in general; namely, REVENUE! because without revenue, that is to say without taxation, the expences and extravagances of ministers and their favourites cannot be supported; pimps and parasites cannot swell to power and grandeur; numerous trains of spies, informers, and assassins, cannot be supported; and, in short, the whole system of that grandeur, luxury, extravagance and folly, which constitute what ministers call the grandeur and prosperity of the nation, must tumble into ruin if this revenue were not to be kept in the most flourishing and prosperous condition. In order to support this revenue, it has been necessary to oppress, in a great degree, the agriculture of the country: for as *Soame Jenyns*, (who though an aristocrat, could sometimes find out the truth) observed, the commerce of this country may be considered as a hog—You see he thought the rich merchants the swinish multitude!—The commerce of this country may be considered as a hog: if you touch but one bristle upon its back, it immediately begins to make such a grunting, that it throws the whole sty into confusion; and the country is distracted with its clamour; while agriculture, like a poor sheep, is led up silently every year, to yield its fleeces to the shearer, without uttering an individual murmur.

Now, Citizens, such being the pacific disposition of agriculture, or the individuals who are employed in agriculture; and such being the turbulent disposition of our rich aristocratic merchants, it is easy to see that ministers will have as large a portion as they can, out of the labour and sweat of the industrious poor.

But let us now consider how inclosures are at present carried on. A bill is brought into Parliament, that virtuous and immaculate assembly, concerning which I always want words to speak with becoming reverence!—A bill is brought into parliament, by a rich proprietor, who has got a large estate, by the side of a common; and thinks that common would be a very good addition to this estate, and is, therefore, desirous that this common should be inclosed for his benefit and advantage. Well what is the mode of proceeding? A time is appointed, and sometimes no time at all, for you will remember, that, some years ago, a Mr. William Tooke, had an estate in the neighbourhood of a brother of the Lord Chief Justice De Grey, which Chief Justice was a very useful



ful friend to Lord North. And this relation of the Chief Justice had a mind to inclose Mr. Wm. Tooke's estate, for his benefit and advantage. A bill was brought into Parliament. It was introduced, read, and re-read on the same day, and committed to be read the third day, and passed the day following. How was this prevented? Why John Horne, who has since taken the name of Tooke, and who has done many gloriously audacious things in the cause of liberty; and who, notwithstanding the assassin-like attack that has been made upon his aged life, by the Reevites and Pittites of the day, during the last summer, by keeping him shut up in a close unwholesome room, I hope he will live to do many more gloriously audacious things in the same cause—This John Horne Tooke wrote a libel upon the Speaker of the House of Commons: and I have heard him say, that it was certainly the most audacious libel that ever was penned. He got it immediately inserted in the newspaper. This libel kicked up, as he expected, a monstrous riot in St. Stephen's chapel:—~~for that is sometimes—or at least it used to be:~~—not the present House of Commons to be sure:—I speak only of former Houses of Commons, about which it is no treason to speak one's mind freely. These, however, have been formerly the most riotous and sometimes the most blackguard assemblies in the nation. The present parliament is undoubtedly very much reformed: but I hope the next will be reformed still more. The Speaker, in a very great fury, took the chair; and immediately declared, he would not sit there and have the dignity of the House attacked through his sides, in this way. A warm debate was produced, and the attention of the public was called towards the subject.

They attempted, but were not wise enough to know how to do it, to punish the author of the libel: but they never dared to bring in the bill a third time; and the relation of the great, and upright, and immaculate Lord Chief Justice, who was the great and powerful friend of the great and powerful Lord North, never had his bill brought in again; and was glad to make his peace, in a fair and honourable manner, with the said Mr. Wm. Tooke, whose estate he had attempted to inclose as his own.

In the usual course, however, a bill is brought in, and petitions may be presented, and which, when they are supported, some little compensation, to be sure, is generally made to the lower orders of society. But suppose it happens, as it does frequently happen, and must frequently happen,  
that

that those poor individuals have no friend even to put it into their minds that they have the power of doing such a thing: and the great are not very anxious that the poor about them, should be very well informed as to their political rights! No: they are to be fleeced as bare as can be, and their very bones are to be picked, after they are fleeced, by the rich man, who having committed a highway robbery upon their little properties, talks of the security of property, and enters into associations, with Reeves and his cabalistical informers, to prevent *Republicans and Levellers* from enquiring into the right by which these robberies have been committed.

But, Citizens, it is very evident that a tenth part of that expence, which has been devoted in this mad and ridiculous war, and in supporting the places, pensions, and emoluments of the corrupt set who have produced the war—a tenth part of this revenue would have cultivated, or made considerable advances towards *cultivating, all the waste lands throughout the country, for the benefit and advantage of the common people*;—not a bare common, with here a blade of grass and there a blade of grass, and here a dangling briar and there a copse to destroy their little flocks. No, they may turn them into a plentiful, luxuriant, smiling country, from which they might reap a part of their subsistence; and not be compelled to toil from their bed to their table, and from their table to their beds, and thus from day to day, in one constant succession of labour, as if the great mass of mankind were only born to breed slaves for the higher orders of society; and to toil and sweat, and die, without comfort and accommodation.

Go even into the neighbourhood of this metropolis; where manure is abundant; where the means of cultivation are easy;—go which way you will; turn to the east, the west, the north or south;—see what tracks of land lay bare and desolate, which, with a little of the care of government, if they had time to bestow it upon such *insignificant subjects*, might procure a comfortable subsistence for innumerable families, whose little cottages, rising here and there, with a little assistance, might turn this waste into a blooming Eden, and make this country, as one of our poets has called it, “the exhaustless granary of the world!” But all our resources are swallowed up by this mad and ruinous war. Nothing can be thought of but the annihilation of freedom. Nothing can be thought of but spreading the name of a *Pitt*, over the continent; and the empty boast, of a shuffling individual and his



his coadjutor, *Dundas*, having given a constitution to a country, who would neither accept of that constitution, nor suffer either the one or the other of them to be door keeper to the Convention for which they would form the laws.

For this, agriculture is to be neglected, the arts are to be destroyed, Wisdom is to be forbidden to open her lips, infant Genius is no more to plume its unfledged wings in popular assemblies, lest it should soar to the realm of light and truth. Every thing is to be neglected; every thing is to be overthrown; the poor are to be starved in myriads, and only have the melancholy alternative to turn their throats like sheep to the butchering hand—I was going to say of *their* enemy—No, not of their enemy, but of the enemy of *Pitt* and his *Pittites*, and *Dundas* and the asses which follow him!—for this, I say, every right, every happiness, every social duty, are to be swallowed up! carnage is to reign, year after year, campaign after campaign! mad project after mad project!—Disappointment, instead of producing wisdom, is only to produce desperation!—and the wretched inhabitants of *La Vendee* are again to be seduced, we are told, from their allegiance; that war may once more rage through that devoted country, and the minister of this devoted country may have occasion to plunge it still deeper, into misery and desolation. From calamities so aggravated I was going to call for guardian angels—I was going to call for preserving Deities to rescue us. But no: I call upon the good sense—I call upon the virtue—I call upon the spirit, and integrity of the people, to snatch the people from the precipice upon which they stand, and preserve us from the desolation which else must inevitably swallow us.

## THE EPITHALAMIUM.

(FROM THE PERIPATETIC.)

SPORTIVE Lyre, whose artless strings,  
 Brush'd by young Affection's wings,  
 (Nymphs and rustics list'ning round)  
 Whisper'd sweet the varied sound—  
 Sounds which only aim'd to borrow  
 Pathos from the youthful heart,—  
 Thrills of Hope, and Sighs of Sorrow—  
 Fleeting joy, and transient smart!—  
*Sportive* Lyre! ah, once again—  
 Once again, and then no more—  
 Let me wake the youthful strain,  
 And thy playful strings explore.  
 Once again—and then, adieu!—  
*Bolder* heights my soul shall try;  
 Bolder objects rise in view—  
 TRUTH and godlike LIBERTY!  
 To these my eye enamour'd turns:  
 For these my ardent bosom burns:  
 Let these alone my thoughts employ—  
 TRUTH and godlike LIBERTY!  
 Rous'd by these, my glowing soul  
 Pants a nobler wreath to gain;—  
 Pants for GLORY's patriot goal  
 Where the *daring* Virtues reign!  
 Pants to hear the graver Muse  
 Wake the loud enthusiast shell  
 Whose notes heroic pride infuse  
 And bid the soul with ardour swell:—  
 Noble Ardour!—virtuous Zeal!  
 Parent of each generous deed;  
 Guardian of the PUBLIC WEAL,  
 For which the valiant joy to bleed.  
 Thoughts like these, from hence, alone,  
 Shall this glowing bosom own.—  
 Thoughts that lift the soul on high  
 To make its own Eternity,  
 And with Meonian rapture swell  
 The notes of Fame's immortal shell.

Meanwhile, Iō Hymen! thy triumphs I join,—  
 My Fancy awhile to thy ardours resign:

*Those*



*Those ardours* which oft, when anxiety reigns,  
 When the nerves wildly throb, or when languid the veins,  
 By Stella awakened, pour balm thro' my soul,  
 Lull to sleep every pang, and each sorrow controul,  
 And, chasing each passion that peace would destroy,  
 Restore me to harmony, softness, and joy;—  
*Those ardours* by Nature indulgently given  
 To realize all that is look'd for in heaven,—  
 To unite us in bonds of affection and peace,  
 And bid the rude struggles of selfishness cease,  
 Till, heart link'd to heart, all the universe smile,  
 And Social Affection each sorrow beguile,  
 While Sympathy's touch shall the union sustain,  
 And vibrate alike thro' each link of the chain.  
 Yes such, if, by Nature conducted, and join'd  
 Not by Interest and Pride, but the tie of the mind,  
 Sex blended with sex from affection alone,  
 And Simplicity made every bosom its throne—  
 Such, such are the blessings from Hymen would flow,  
 And this *wilderness* turn to an *Eden* below:—  
~~An Eden of Mind where each virtue should blow.~~

Then, Iô! thou Hymen that reign'st o'er the few  
 Who boldly the dictates of Nature pursue!  
 Blest power! who alone to the virtuous art known  
 Whose bosoms the charm of Simplicity own,  
 While a *sordid impostor*, usurping thy name,  
 Of throngs of proud votaries the homage can claim—  
 The creatures of Fashion, of Avarice the slaves,  
 Whom Vanity leads, and each folly depraves.

But see, what kind omens bright dawning appear,  
 The *patriot bosom of Virtue* to cheer!—  
 Simplicity comes, by fair Liberty led,  
 And Hymen—pure Hymen shall lift up his head.  
 Each Social Affection once more shall return,  
 And the altar of Truth with pure incense shall burn,  
 While Love, like the Phœnix, shall rise from the flame,  
 His laws shall restore, and his saboth proclaim;  
 And, wide thro' the Heavens his broad pinions unfurl'd,  
 Shall shake his bright plumes, and shed peace o'er the  
 world.

## THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XVIII.

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*Consequences of depriving the MASS of the PEOPLE  
of their share in the REPRESENTATION. The  
THIRD LECTURE "on the Causes of the present  
DEARNESS & SCARCITY of PROVISIONS,  
delivered Wednesday, May 6th, 1795.*

CITIZENS,

THIS is the third time I have met you upon the subject of this night's Lecture: if I were to meet you again and again till I have gone through the whole of my subject, I know not when this course of lectures could possibly close. The further our researches extend, the more we find to investigate. This, so true in sciences, is perhaps more conspicuously true with respect to the sources of those great national calamities under which we are sinking.

I anticipated to you on the first night the very wide field of enquiry into which this topic would lead me. I was not aware, however, of its full extent. In short, it would be totally impossible to do justice to the subject in a course of lectures that professes to be miscellaneous; and I feel myself called upon, from the pressure of temporary matter, to bring it to a conclusion this evening.

In my mode of investigating it I have divided it into two general heads: that is to say, the immediate causes of aggravated scarcity and dearth; and the general regulations which have unfortunately been adopted, in this country, by which the gradual increase has been occasioned. For the sake of methodical arrangement, it would have been proper, perhaps, to have begun with the latter. Circumstances, however, led me to a different arrangement: particularly my having announced as a part of the subject a topic which necessarily connected itself with that branch of the enquiry, at a time when I was not aware that I should deliver any more than one lecture upon the subject before me.

The greatest part then of what I had to say upon the causes of the temporary scarcity, I have brought to a conclusion



sion in the former lecture. I am now going to the immediate investigation of what may be considered as the permanent, though growing, causes of the dearness of provisions in this country. And, among those, I shall consider paper credit; the corn laws; the monopoly of farms; the encouragement of the breed of horses; tythes; the neglect of our fisheries; and contracts and monopolies between fishermen and fishmongers; from whence I shall digress once more to the affairs of Poland, and then lead you back to that which in fact is the fountain of all the other causes, the monstrous growth of barefaced corruption in this country.

With respect to paper credit, it may not, at first view, appear to be immediately connected with the subject. But this opinion will vanish, if you remember that it is an admitted principle, making exceptions for accidents which may produce temporary scarcity, and also for the contracts and monopolies between the holders of particular articles, that the price of commodities must necessarily be regulated by the quantity of circulating medium;—or in other words, that gold and silver and all other arbitrary signs of property, decrease and fluctuate in their value, in proportion as they become more abundant, but that the real articles of necessity always remain precisely the same. The calculations and customary language of the world lead us indeed to a contrary conclusion. But the fact is, that it is gold that is purchased with commodity, and not commodity with gold: the gold being in reality nothing but the counters or the figures, if I may so express myself, by which the quantum of wealth is calculated. Whenever, therefore, the numeral or nominal wealth is more abundant than the production, you must put down a greater quantity of these counters, or the signs of these counters, to tell how many sheep, how many oxen, or how much corn you are worth, or able to buy.

You are to consider that paper credit, though it does not increase the specie, but on the contrary may be proved to occasion its diminution, yet increases the circulating medium: that is to say, that paper is taken to market, particularly the wholesale market, instead of specie, and, passing in common with the circulating specie, increases the quantity of nominal wealth in circulation, and of course occasions any given quantity of money to be worth so much the less. Thus then you will find that the circulation of paper begets an increase in the price of all the articles of consumption which the great mass of the people have occasion for. It is so important that this  
part

part of the subject should be understood, that I would rather be guilty of tautology than be obscure. I will state it therefore in another way: As the price of the article which can be brought into the market, must be proportionate to the quantity of circulating medium which can be carried into the market, it follows of course that if I, having 5000l. in specie, can circulate my paper to the amount of 5000l. more, and thus carry in effect 10,000l. into the market, instead of 5000l. I produce an inevitable increase in the price of the articles to be consumed. This, with respect to the dealers in this paper coin, is matter of no inconvenience. It is a struggle of credit. It enables them to carry on their commerce with greater facility; and he whose word passes most current has the best of it. But the common people, the working man and the little shopkeeper, have no part of the credit resulting from this circulating paper. They must take it indeed, sometimes, in payment; and they must abide by the loss of the exchange, and the delay. But their notes will not be accepted; their accommodations between individual and individual will not pass current; they are not permitted to swindle the public, though the rich are; but they must bear their part of the increased price of the necessaries of life, in consequence of this swindling in which they have no share.

And yet, Citizens, no sort of property is protected with so much jealousy as this fabricated, circulating medium. The laws of this country, severe and sanguinary enough in many respects that relate to the treatment of the lower orders of society, have thought it necessary to be still more rigid than usual with respect to this paper credit: and consequently we find that forgery is among those crimes and offences which never escape the last sentence and punishment of the law.

Why is this? There must be some reason for it. Surely we cannot admit that forgery is a crime peculiarly marked with the blackest stains of turpitude.—I stand not up as an *advocate* for crimes that violate property; but I wish that a scale should be observed between the punishment and the turpitude of actions. Surely, then, I say we cannot suppose that there is more moral turpitude in the act of forgery than in many actions that are passed by with a much slighter degree of punishment. The common feelings of mankind revolt at such a supposition: and nothing but that commercial influence which, of late years, has contaminated our councils and our laws, could have countenanced the unremitting



severity with which this crime has been pursued. We find accordingly that where individuals have not been misled either by commercial connections, or by particular attachments, to the modes and practices of the times, that a great disposition arises among mankind to condemn or blame this extreme severity: nor could all the arguments of commercial expediency and the inviolable barrier of mercantile credit, stifle the voice of public sympathy in the recent cases of Peru and Dodd.

A very ludicrous anecdote, applicable to this subject, was once related to me by an officer whose duty it is to attend one of the circuits. A man had been indicted for forgery at the assizes; and a jury of farmers and graziers was impanelled to try the offence. The facts were proved beyond the possibility of contradiction; but the honest farmers did not understand how it should happen, that a man who committed a robbery without any sort of violence, or injury to the peace of society, should be punished in a manner so much more severe than many whose crimes were marked with deeper turpitude. They therefore consulted among themselves, and presently agreed, that tho' the thing to be sure were proven, yet as for matter of that, it was impossible to hang a man for a bit of paper. If he had stole a sheep, it would have been another thing; but to hang a man for a bit of paper, no they could never agree with that matter: as they had just been trying a man, who had killed another by an unlucky blow, and which the Judge instructed them to find only manslaughter, they agreed to bring this in manslaughter also; and manslaughter it was.

But however much at a loss, reasoning like speculative moralists, we might be to account why a superior degree of severity should be adopted, for the preservation of this particular species of property, practice will soon give us a clue. Nothing is so friendly to individual accumulation and monopoly.

This the legislators of the ancient world very well knew. They knew that in proportion as you can compress property into a small compass, a few will have an opportunity of ingrossing to themselves a larger proportion of the riches of the country, and of keeping the other portions of society in misery and depression. Lycurgus therefore invented a species of coin, which has been rendered famous through succeeding ages, by the name of iron money. So that if a man in Sparta was worth twenty or thirty pounds, he was obliged  
to

to hire a waggon, to remove it from place to place : an expedient which could not fail of producing the desired effect, of preserving a considerable degree of equality among the citizens.

A contrary object has been kept in view by modern legislators, and of course, a contrary practice has been appealed to. It was found beneficial to the revenue, it was found beneficial to corruption, to luxury, and to usurpation, that property should come into the hands of as few individuals as possible; and therefore methods have been devised to favour this monopoly.

The history of the progress of wealth, or rather of the medium of wealth, would be a very curious one if I had time to enter into it at large. In the first instance undoubtedly all wealth must have consisted in what is now called *kind*:—Persons who have collected or who have paid tythe in kind will understand what I mean. But this unwieldy sort of wealth would be very inconvenient upon the present system. It would undoubtedly clog very much the wheels of what ministers call Government—that is to say, corruption. This, however, you would not perhaps consider as a very grievous calamity; and you might even be tempted to exclaim with Pope

“ O that such bulky bribes as all might see  
 “ Still, as of old, encumber'd villainy!  
 “ A Statesman's slumbers how this speech would spoil!  
 “ Sir, Spain has sent a thousand jars of oil;  
 “ Huge bales of British cloth blockade the door:  
 “ A hundred oxen at your levee roar.”

*Essay on Use of Riches.*

Specie, then, was soon introduced; but was found not sufficiently convenient: for James I. having ordered a large sum to be given to one of his favorites; but happening, by strange accident, to have a minister who had a little honesty, he took him into the room where the money was all spread out. James was astonished at the formidable appearance of so many guineas; and declared it was too much for any individual. He ordered therefore that his favourite should be content with half.

Nor is this the only kind of inconvenience which politicians have experienced from transactions in specie. It has been found that guineas, like roaring oxen can tell tales. Of this



this I will satisfy myself with one example. A great politician, in the time of William III. had been desirous of a private audience with Majesty, and had accordingly crept up the back stairs: for whether you have a *Whig King* or a *Tory King*, there must always be a back stair-case to the royal closet. What the important intelligence was which he had to communicate was never known, for the affair was conducted with becoming privacy. Nor would it ever have been known what was the occasion of the subsequent alteration in his sentiments and conduct, but for an unlucky accident. But just as he was stealing down again, the bag, in which the bribe was contained, which was to pay him for his future votes in Parliament, happened to burst, and the whole secret was revealed.

"Once 'tis confess'd, beneath the patriot's cloak,  
 "From the crack'd bag the dropping guinea spoke,  
 "And, gingling down the back stairs, told the crew  
 "Old Cato is as great a rogue as you."

But, Citizens, paper credit has at once given wings and secrecy to corruption. There is now no necessity for cumbersome waggons to take away your heavy iron wealth; no occasion for canvas bags to hold your millions; or cloaks to hide them from the public eye. A little bit of paper that may be "passed thro' the hollow circle of a ring," may answer every demand of Government or corruption—may purchase a whole House of Commons, or transport a band of Patriots to Botany Bay.

"Blest paper credit! last and best supply,  
 "That lends Corruption lighter wings to fly:  
 "Gold, wing'd by thee, can compass hardest things,  
 "Can purchase states, or fetch, or carry kings.  
 "A single leaf can waft whole navies o'er,  
 "Or ship off armies to a distant shore;  
 "A leaf, like Sybil's, waft us to and fro,—  
 "Our fates, our fortunes as the winds do blow!"

The next article to which I shall call your attention you will immediately perceive to be most intimately connected with the subject. I mean the corn laws.

It is not necessary for me to enter into an investigation of all those commercial regulations which have so strong a tendency to favour the wealthy few, and keep the rest  
 of

of society in a state of depression and poverty. I shall only notice such of those regulations as relate immediately to the subject in question: though undoubtedly every one of them in some degree eventually affects the price of all commodities and necessaries of life.

Commerce, in fact, ought to be no part of the subject now before us: for the object of agriculture ought not to be *commerce*, but the comfort and accommodation of the people. But our regulations have not always had this beneficial object in view. We find but too many of them which have a particular tendency towards favoring the opulent landholder, and bolstering up, thro' his means, the System of Rotten Boroughs and Corruption. We find many precautions taken to increase the weight and influence of those gentlemen: and for a very good reason: they are not only proprietors of land; that might be of no more estimation in the eyes of a minister than any other species of commodity, but they are proprietors also of those rotten boroughs, which Lord *Mornington* and Mr. *Pitt* are pleased to suppose constitute so sublime a part of the excellence of our constitution, that, if we were to tear them away, there would be but little left in the glorious fabric to demand our veneration, or promote our felicity,

Citizens, it is very clear that the higher corn and cattle sell, the higher the landlord can raise his rent. For he will always take care (especially now long leases are out of fashion) not to lose his share of the advantage, whatever it may be, which the industry or the ingenuity of the farmer may produce. The higher, therefore, the market, the higher will be his rent, and the greater his opportunities of indulging in those gratifications to which, undoubtedly, the higher orders are entitled, though it would be something like blasphemy to attempt to extend them to the lower classes of the community.

Hence we find that, among other *wise* regulations, there is a bounty upon the exportation of corn, whenever it shall be below a given price: and as the persons who have an interest in fixing this standard as high as it can be fixed, are the very persons who, by the present Constitution of Borough Jobbing and Aristocratic Influence, have the power of altering it whenever they please, we have—or rather, **THEY have**, by means of this politic regulation an infallible means of keeping up the price to the improvement of their own fortunes, it is true—but to the beggary and starvation of the multitude.



multitude. And yet, while our wealthy land-holders are thus associated and represented for the advancement of their rent-rolls, and our unrepresented labourers and mechanics are punished like felons for associating for an increase of wages, Aristocrats have the audacity to talk of the liberties of Britons—of equal laws, and equal justice.

But the injustice does not terminate here. I have repeatedly proved, on a variety of occasions, that, as all taxes must be paid out of the profits of productive labour, the whole burthen of taxation must, in truth, eventually fall upon the shoulders of the laborious orders of the community. Who is it then that pays the bounty?—The laborious poor!—Who is it that receives the benefit of that bounty?—The landholder!—the indolent rich!—Is there any doubt of the accuracy of this statement?—Reflect awhile.—Are not the taxes paid by the people? Is not the bounty paid out of the taxes? Does it not follow therefore, of course, that the more Government pays in bounties the more taxes must be levied upon the people?—And all for what? Why truly for the noble privilege of paying a greater price for every bit of bread they put in their mouths.

How monstrous to plunder the poor peasant and artisan, in this manner, of the very means of purchasing the necessaries of life, and then to tell them that they must pay so much the more for having been so plundered!!!

Nor is this all. Having taken precautions to prevent the price of the necessaries of life falling below the minimum which our land-holders and borough-mongers will condescend to accept, they have also taken other precautions to mount it up to the *maximum* which their *consciences* would suffer them to exact. For this barriers are to be erected to prevent the free progress of mercantile intercourse;—the first great maxim in the communion of nations (“Let the abundances of each be exchanged, that the scarcities of each may be removed!”) is to be violated;—and commerce, the boasted glory of our isle!—Commerce, who from her very essence should be free as air, is to groan in manacles!

Unless the average price in our markets should be upwards of 50s. per quarter, no corn can be imported from foreign countries.

Now, Citizens, be pleased to remember that though 50s. is or was a very high price, yet good wheat may be considerably more than 50s. Nay, and must be so before the ports can be opened; because all the wheat sold at market is not good;

good; and as it is the *average*, and not the *maximum*, that opens or closes the ports, the average price may be 50s. while all the good wheat may be sold at a price very considerably higher. I will instance this by a calculation. The average is fixed by the inspection of officers who attend the markets for the purpose of taking an account of the quantities sold in different districts. Suppose that 50 quarters are sold at 53s. that will give you 132l. 10s.; suppose 200 quarters at 52s. the amount will be 750l.; then suppose 400 more at 49s. which is 980l. for the whole. The result is, that 650 quarters of wheat selling for 1632l. 10s. the average price becomes 50s.; but the good corn has been sold at 52 and 53s. Thus then you see, that till good corn has amounted to 53s. or upwards, the ports must be shut, and no foreign corn must be admitted to come in competition with the corn produced in this country; because such a competition would do what? Injure the great mass of the people?—No; do them good—make bread so much the cheaper. And who can dispute that it would be good for the great mass of the people, that all the necessaries of life should be sold as cheap as possible?—No; the injury would be to the rich landholder, who would not be able to charge so great a price for his land: a thing so monstrous, that the happiness of millions ought not, in the eyes of wise and beneficent legislators, to be held in competition with it for a moment. But even this average, extravagant as it would once have been thought, is not fixed. It is fixed, indeed, with respect to you and me: it is fixed that it shall never be altered for *our* advantage; but it is not fixed that it shall never be altered for the advantage of our borough-mongers and legislators. The fact is, it is altered whenever it suits their conscience that it should be. At no great distance of time, the average was 48s. instead of 50s.—But mark the consequence of your having no voice, no interest in the choice of your *representatives*; of having your legislature with those individuals who are to make your laws and regulations—the rich landed proprietors—the owners of rotten boroughs—the sapient individuals who happen to possess, upon their estates, the fragments and relics of Druids temples at Old Sarum; or to see from the wave-invaded shore the ruins of a church, still struggling with the surrounding sea, whose shattered spire continues to be represented, though the spot that encircled it is no longer the habitation of man.

It is natural enough that those persons, being the only individuals represented, being the only individuals who have any



power of controul over the representatives, their interest should be particularly attended to; and that, therefore, in proportion as the price of corn increases, the average price fixed in the act of parliament should also be altered: nor should I be at all surprized, if, in a few years, we were to run from 50 to 60, to 70, to 100. Why not? The individuals who make the laws having an interest in making this average as high as it possibly can be borne, what should restrain them but a dread of the enlightened spirit of the people? And who shall dare attempt to inspire that dread? To put the borough-mongers in fear, you are told, is to overawe Parliament; and to overawe Parliament, you are told, is High Treason: and as no one, it may be supposed, is very desirous of being hanged, drawn and quartered——

“ Must not things mend in their common course,

“ From bad to worse, from worse to that is worst?”

SPENCER.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, a sapient magistrate in the northern extremity of the country—a place for the magistrates of which I dare say we all have a becoming esteem)—I mean to say the *Lord Justice Clerk*, on the trial of *Morton* and others for sedition, chose to observe that “ the poor of  
“ this country, particularly those infatuated people styling  
“ themselves The Friends of the People, pay no taxes at all.  
“ It is the landed-property men alone that pay all the taxes;  
“ for look you, my Lords, we pay the poor for their labour;  
“ and so, as we gi the poor the filler to pay the taxes wi,  
“ it is we, in truth, that pay aw the taxes. And if they be  
“ not content with our good laws and wise government, they  
“ may e’en tack their alls upon their backs, and pack off wi  
“ themselves. And let them gang, we’ll be better quat o’  
“ them. But we can’t take our land upon our backs: Na;  
“ we mun stay.”—So that, notwithstanding the increased price of rent—notwithstanding the encreased price of the commodities of life, upon which, by the way, all taxes ultimately fall—notwithstanding every burthen and imposition which the laborious poor are subject to, we are told that they pay no part of the taxes: and, as a notable proof of this, we are told that they have nothing left, but that which they can put upon their backs, and go off whenever they choose: and as an equal proof that the rich people, the landed *property men* pay all the taxes, they tell you they have the misfortune to be encumbered with such valuable estates, that it is impossible  
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for them to go, let things be as bad as they will. They cannot put their land upon their backs, and consequently they *must stay*.

Citizens, I might here animadvert upon the unchangeable nature of court politics. *Justice Clerk* tells the common people they may get themselves gone, as soon as they will. They may put their alls upon their backs, and away they may trudge; for that it will be a good thing to be rid of them.—What does the cabinet of this country say at this time? Why, it issues a mandate (legally, I grant you, but mark how consistently) saying, that though you are upon the brink of starvation—though your children are crying to you for bread—though distress and misery of every description encircle you round, you shall not attempt to depart from this country, if you have not the permission of *Mr. Secretary Dundas*. It shall be esteemed as a crime of a very high magnitude. You shall be dragged from the ships, and the ships shall be detained, and not permitted to proceed upon their voyage. You shall have but one alternative—either to starve in your cottages, or be both starved and butchered too, in the ranks of those armies who are fighting for a cause from which undoubtedly you will receive very great advantages; though I very much doubt whether any of you are wise enough to discover in what that advantage will consist. But why animadvert upon inconsistencies? If men can sit upon the bench, and talk such rank nonsense as this, what matters whether they contradict to-day what they said yesterday, or to-morrow what they say to-day?—The labouring part of the community may take their alls upon their back, and quit the country!!! Suppose they did, what would *Lord Justice Clerk's* landed estate be worth, after they were gone? what would it produce? I will tell him what it would produce—Such innumerable swarms of vermin as would threaten him with immediate destruction, and to deliver him from which he would pray for the restoring arms of those *Sans Culottes* whom oppressive cruelty had banished from the country. What can *Lord Justice Clerk*, and all the Lords and the Justices—and the Lord knows who to help them, produce from their estates? Let them sow them with the musty records of the courts of law; let them plant them with acts of parliament, and manure them with the sanguinary sentences of the Court of Justiciary; let them, if they choose, dig holes, and bury that gold which they so idolized. What will it produce? Briars, thorns, thistles enough undoubtedly. Every sort of annoyance it will



produce. But bread, the food of man, the barley that should make him wholesome liquor, will it yield them these? Will it feed their sheep or oxen, or make them broad cloath? No. —No sort of commodity whatever, for sustenance or comfort, will their land, their law, or their acts of Parliament produce them. Nor will all the mandates of the Privy Council, nor the grave decisions of the Bench make a potatoe grow without cultivation, or turn acorns into melons and peaches. No: these they must receive from the labours of that common rabble, without whom the *Lord Justice Clerk* has the wisdom to say, they could do a great deal better than with them.

O what a sort of system is it we live under, when Judges sit upon the Bench and preach doctrines so absurd and so pernicious: doctrines which nothing can equal but the intoxicated cruelty of the late aristocrats of France, who, while in their gilded carriages, they rolled carelessly over some poor tattered beggar, whom they disdained to turn out of the way to avoid, have been known to exclaim "It is no matter. It is only one of the common fellows; and we had always too many of these wretches!"

We have seen, Citizens what has been the consequence of such doctrines in France, I hope we shall see no such consequences here. But if we do, whose is the fault? Does it rest with those who call out to the oppressor "forbear your inhumanity—Reform your ill policy?" or does it result from those who pollute the sacred vestments of authority by doctrines so diabolical as that which I have read?

Another cause of the growing scarcity to which I shall refer you, is the monopoly of farms. The time has been, as Goldsmith beautifully expresses it, the happy time, "when every rood of land maintained its man." What is the case now! Where will you go for those little farms which supported in comfort, and supplied with all the simple necessities and decencies of life, a family healthy from its industry, virtuous from surrounding necessities, and whose interests were inseparably united by the humble situation it was placed in with that of the great mass of the people? Those little farms are no longer to be found. Large proprietors have grasped whole provinces, almost, in one concern; and that useful order of men is annihilated, to make room for the spacious granaries, and unwieldy opulence of monopolists and speculators, who, by reason of their wealth and fewness, find combination and compact easy, and rule the market at their own will and pleasure.

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A correspondent, residing in Shropshire, gives me the particulars of some circumstances which have taken place in his own neighbourhood. He tells me that, in two villages, in the neighbourhood of his own residence, he remembers, at no considerable distance of time, nine farms to have been contained in the one, and seven farms in the other: each of which supported, of course, the families of the occupiers in decency and comfort. What is the condition now? The *nine* farms are reduced to *three*; and the *seven* are reduced to *two*. Thus then you have two families living in luxury, where you used to have seven maintained in decent competency; and you have three exulting in their large possessions, where you used to have nine carrying their produce to a fair and early market, to the accommodation and benefit of society.

Whose is the advantage of this? There can be no doubt: the landed proprietor's. He collects his rent with less trouble. He finds it more easy to obtain it immediately at the time when it is due; or the proprietor, forsooth, is a man of capital and credit; and if he cannot get specie from him, he can get circulating paper. He finds, also, that he is enabled to demand a higher rent; because when only one family is to be supported, where three were to be supported before, the farmer can be content with a more moderate ratio of profit, and yet his family live in greater abundance than the three families could afford.

This is not all. The mischief does not stop here. This monopoly of farms destroys competition, and encourages speculation; and consequently creates an artificial, and increases the real, scarcity. The little farmer was obliged to take his commodity into the market, when he wanted to make up his rent, or other payments; the great farmer can keep it in his barns till he meets with a chapman at such a price as he chooses to put upon it. The little farmer could not speculate upon the chances of scarcity, and thus create one where otherwise it would never have existed; the great farmer can: he finds no inconvenience in such speculation; because, being a man of considerable property, a man of *respectability*, (as we denominate those who have the power and the inclination to starve their fellow beings by wholesale) he knows that, if he is pressed for an immediate supply, he can have it, by means of the fictitious circulating medium. The fact is, that the very character of a farmer is almost annihilated. In many parts of the country you see no such thing as an individual who attends to his own farm, and is thus brought to something like



like a level with the labourers whom he employs. Instead of this the land is divided between vast proprietors, who consider their farms as objects of commercial speculation, and who look down upon the poor dependent drudges who toil for them, as beings who have no sort of title to commiseration and fellow feeling.

Citizens, we must immediately perceive, if we use a moment's reflection, that in the present state of human intellect and human passions, absolute equality of property is totally impossible. It is a visionary speculation which none but the calumniators of the friends of freedom ever entertained. *Reeves* and his associators might deem it convenient to suppose persons to entertain such notions; but they existed only in the distempered brains of Alarmists. But though this is not attainable, there is another state of society perfectly practicable, and which is the best substitute for this poetical vision—this golden age of absolute equality: I mean the imperceptible gradations of rank, where step rises above step by slow degrees, and link mingles with link in intimate and cordial union, till the whole society connected together by inseparable interests indulges that fellow feeling between man and man, from which, and from which alone, the real fruits of humanity and justice can be expected.

Alas! "What can we argue but from what we know?" This argument, so often applied as the test of science, we may apply to feeling also. We must know what calamity is, before we can feel for it. The calamities of the order of society but just below us!—an order into which we see the possibility that we may ourselves descend, press home to our feelings. We enter into the particulars that constitute their poignancy—we understand their nature, and we feel them in their full force. We are disposed both to respect and relieve them. But he who has been nursed in pomp and luxury, looks down upon the poor drudge, by whom he is supported, as a beast of burden, created for his ease and advantage; and feels no more for his calamities, in three instances out of four, than for the pangs of the expiring brute who bleeds beneath the stroke of the butcher to supply his table.

But these imperceptible gradations are destroyed by the present monopolizing system. There are but three classes of men left among us—the monied speculators, among whom may be classed the great farmers I have been describing; the proud high towering drones, who hum, and buz, and make a noise in the hive; but who never brought a morsel of honey  
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into the cells; and the poor hard-working drudges, who toil from day to night, and almost from night to day, and receive for their useful and important services the bitter inheritance of unpitied poverty. In great towns it is true gradations something more various may be traced; even in these we are hastening to the same dismal state of separation. Hence it is, from these wide gaps, these chasms in society, that there is no common interest, no general affection, no universal sympathy, binding man to man, and constituting one great, united, harmonious mass, having but one object, and adhering steadily together for the preservation of each other and the attainment of that object.

Perhaps it is not proper for me, who certainly am not very far advanced in agricultural speculations, to lay down any particular regulations; but I doubt very much whether it would not be to the happiness of this country, if no farm was held by any individuals of more than two hundred acres. But we have now thousands of acres held in one farm.—What wonder, then, that there are monopolies? What produces monopolies? When great competition exists monopoly cannot flourish. But when the power of competition is in the hands of a few individuals, they have nothing to do but to agree to do that which their mutual interest will prompt them to fulfill, and they have the whole public at their mercy; and the power of starving them into a compliance with their extravagant demands.

Citizens, I do not intend to indulge myself frequently in speculative projects. But one has been submitted to me which I think worthy of attention. I have formerly shewn you, that almost half the land in this island remains in an uncultivated state. “Now we will suppose,” says my correspondent, “that four millions of acres of this was parcelled into small farms of 80 or 100 acres; this would become a receptacle for 50,000 families put into possession of a comfortable subsistence; and would give us in a few years, by the increased accommodation and comfort of these families, an addition to the rising generation of many thousand individuals. Take into consideration also the advantage that would result to agricultural production: and if we suppose only 30 acres of tillage in one farm, this, on low calculation, would produce us 12,500,000 measures of nett grain.” I do not pledge myself to the accuracy of the calculations made in this proposal: But it is easy to see what advantages might result by employing our revenues in such improvements instead of lavishing



lavishing them in projects of sanguinary ambition. These are the means by which our grandeur and power might be indeed increased, instead of depopulating the continent, and rushing into frantic crusades to extinguish the principles of Jacobinism, and restore Royalty and popish Idolatry.—Restore Royalty in France!—We restore Royalty in France!—What absurdity!—What injustice!—Whether the principles of Royalty be right or wrong—whether Republicanism be right or wrong—whether Jacobinism ought to triumph, or Jacobinism ought to fall, what was it to us in the present instance? It was the affair of France, and France ought to be left to settle it; nor had we any more right to go to war to compel that nation to adopt a government according to our taste than I have to break into your houses, and say you have no right to have any sort of food upon your table but such as I choose for you. You like roast beef, perhaps; but you shall have nothing but boiled. You, perhaps, are a Jew and will not eat pork. I tell you you shall have nothing but pork; and if you do not forego your damned Judaical infidelity, and eat pork when I command you, I will pull every hair out of your chin, and turn you out as bare as ever your King Nebuchadnezzar was turned out, to graze upon the common, and eat cold fallads with the beasts of the field.

Another circumstance connected very closely with the state of agriculture is the encouragement given to the breed of horses. No person can be at a loss to conceive how very large a proportion of those commodities which might administer to the comfortable support of man, is devoured by the numerous train of horses kept for a variety of purposes in this country. If we turn our eyes to the studs of Noblemen and Princes; if we consider that many, for mere pomp and vanity, have kept hundreds of horses in stables vying for splendour with the palaces of our nobility, erected at an expence that would build cottages for all the poor in the neighbourhood of London:—if we consider the monstrous quantity of steeds trained for the purposes of gaming, to increase the detestable art of lavishing property on vice and profligacy, instead of bestowing it upon benevolence and charity;—if we take all those circumstances into the calculation which will arise in your minds at the bare mention of the subject, we cannot but immediately reflect, what a large decrease must be thus occasioned of the produce which would otherwise contribute to the support of man. Consider how many cattle might graze, and how much wheat might grow upon the tracts of land allotted

lotted for these steeds; tell me if in this article of luxury and fashion you do not find one of the permanent, though growing causes of that scarcity of provisions of which we at this time complain.

This, also, is extended still further. The farmer must have steeds which occasionally he can convert into horses of pleasure. His very plough would be disgraced by having an ox in it; every part of labour, some of which might even be better performed by oxen, is performed by horses.

To this, also, we ought to add the waste, the profligacy, the dissipation, and destructive vices which result from the scandalous practice of keeping an enormous train of lounging fellows in liveries, the whole of whose labour is devoted, not to increasing the necessities of life, not to add to the useful productions of society, but to increasing the vice, the licentiousness, the luxury, the pride of their employers, swelling them up with the monstrous idea that one set of men was formed to cringe at the footstools of another; and that there are, in reality, distinctions in society besides those of wisdom and virtue. It would be digressing too far to describe all the mischiefs that result to the morals both of the *Lord* thus waited on, and the *Slave* that waits. My present concern is only with the effects upon the production and consumption of the necessities of life; and these are obvious to the most casual observation. I cannot, however, pass by an opportunity of observing, that the very practice of being waited on by a train of insolent slaves in Merry-andrew's coats, besides its other pernicious consequences to society, has a necessary tendency to encourage the idea that one set of men is formed of baser materials than another; that they were born to cringe and bow to a few terrestrial deities; or to be hewers of wood, and drawers of water, mere beasts of burden, for the convenience and pleasure of the erect and lordly few, who call themselves the higher ranks of life: When the fact is, that these characteristics, which we so properly despise, result not from the original nature of man, but from the vicious institutions of society, which make many administer to the luxuries of one; instead of cultivating that spirit of equality to which I hope, one day or other, to see the human race aspire.

It would be unpardonable, when talking of the inconveniences under which our agriculture lies, if I were to pass over the subject of tithes: an oppressive burden, which presses with particular hardship upon those articles to which a con-



siderable degree of favour ought to be extended, in adjusting the burthens of the State. The necessary articles of consumption ought, surely, by the wisdom and care of every Government, to be put under such protection and regulations that they should be sold at the easiest possible rate. How is this to be done? By taxing the farmer, first of all, in common with the other inhabitants of the country, thro' every gradation of his profession, and in every form which the ingenuity of financiers can devise, and then in addition to all this, laying upon his shoulders the aggravated burden of priestly imposition to the amount of a tenth of the gross produce of the soil! A burthen, which, when we consider what has been expended in rent to the landlord, in cultivation of the land, in gathering in the harvest, and a thousand incidental expences, will be found to amount at least to one third part of the profit. This might, perhaps, have been endured with patience at a time when superstition reigned over every mind—when priests were considered as Gods, and had sometimes the audacity openly to call themselves such. But now that the eyes of mankind are opened—when they begin to perceive that every one has a right to save his soul in his own way, and that the pulpit is but too generally prostituted to purposes of political usurpation, the motive for cheerful compliance with so heavy a contribution is no more, and the burthen falling without alleviation upon our shoulders, we cannot but reflect on the immediate effect which this must have on the price of the necessary articles of consumption.

But let us consider also, not only the immediate, but the secondary operation of this *sacred* tax. Has it not a tendency to depress the spirit of agricultural improvement? What encouragement have I to labour from the increase of the produce of my land? What temptations do you hold out to me to improve the soil upon which I live, and to invent new methods of tillage and agriculture, by which society would be benefited? Why this is the advantage: You tell me that a man to hear whom, perhaps, I may piously go three times every Sunday; or to whom, perhaps, I may think it greater piety not to go at all; either because his doctrines are averse to the prejudices in which I have been educated; or because my mind has, some how or other, towered above, or sunk below (for it is not for me to decide) the objects to which he would direct my attention:—This man is to reap the profit of my toil. This man is to reap the harvest I have sown. And, in addition to the increased rent which I must pay to the  
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the landlord, in consequence of the benefit I have conferred upon his land, I am to have an increased burden upon my shoulders to the pious gentleman in the black gown, from whose assistance, I am told, I am not to reap any advantage in this world; but am to receive a copious harvest in the world to come. I have heard say *there are but two sorts of bad pay-masters: those who pay before hand, and those who never pay at all.* But unfortunately every one of us is obliged to be a bad paymaster in this particular. We are obliged to give prompt payment here: but we must trust to the other world for remuneration: where, if we should be deceived, we shall have no opportunity of bringing the individual to the bar of the King's Bench, to receive compensation from the verdict of an honest jury.

It must, however, be admitted that these men have their *uses* in society. When the country is plunged in war, no matter how, there are generally, you know, fasts and prayers appointed, in order to influence the people to exert themselves courageously to procure a successful issue to that war. Now it must be admitted, that these *pious gentlemen* have considerable influence in persuading the people to yield their throats to the knife, for the grandeur and emolument of ministers, and, of course, you know, for our glorious constitution. But to speak a little seriously, whatever might be the objects in view in establishing such an institution as this, is the imposition I am speaking of a means to make that institution successful? Is it consistent with policy, even, that the teachers and hearers should be in a perpetual state of warfare? Yet what but a perpetual state of warfare results, or can result, from this system of tithes? Every person at all acquainted with the history of any country village knows the disgraceful litigations, scandalous to morality, scandalous to the character of man, with which the parishioners are harassed by their ministers, who preach forbearance, and practice intolerance; who tell them they are not to throw their debtor in jail for the sake of a little property, and yet put their debtor into worse than any jail whatever, the Spiritual Court, for what common sense and justice cannot discover to be any debt at all.

I believe the best thing for the happiness and morals of mankind is, that every individual should choose his own religion, according to the conviction of his own heart. If he chooses with TOM PAINE to say **THE WORLD IS MY COUNTRY; and DOING GOOD MY RELIGION,** I see no reason why he should be persecuted for that faith.



If he chooses to bow down to the Trinity; believing that one is three, and three is one, it is scandalous to interrupt the freedom and tranquility of his worship. It is equally scandalous to interrupt that freedom and tranquility if, on the one hand he chooses to worship God in single Unity, or to bow down, on the other, to all the wooden Saints or moulton calves "which God-smiths can invent, or Priests devise." Let him hear all. Let him listen to all. Let him judge of all with candour, and let him remember that *his* grandmother, and *his* nurse (generally the first formers of our religion) are no better judges, nor more infallible Doctors in these matters, than the Pope of Rome, or any other old woman that might happen to model the infant faith of his neighbours. Let him determine according to the dictates of his conscience. (He can have no other guide than conscience or fear. Let those take the scoundrel passion—the principle of fear, whose minds have not nerve enough for bold enquiry. I am for the British manliness of internal conviction!) Let him hear whom he chooses; and let the instructor and the pupil settle their own terms. It is no business of your's or mine where our neighbour goes, or what he believes, or what he pays. All our business is whether he is a good member of society, whether he exerts his faculties, mental or corporeal, to advance the interests of society.

If so general and benevolent a sentiment is adopted, the diabolical "rancour of theological hatred" must be exterminated from the mind of man; and difference of opinion would no more beget that rancour and animosity that have so long deformed the universe; and, under the mask of propagating the religion of peace, spread fire and sword and desolation through the world: while not content with external ravages, the baneful rapacity with which it has been accompanied has seized upon the vitals of national industry; has damaged the improvement of the most useful arts; checked the progress of agriculture, and aggravated the dearth and scarcity of those articles necessary for the subsistence of human life.

Such, Citizens, appear to me to be among the leading causes that affect the *agricultural productions* of the country. There is another branch, however, of this subject which must not be passed over in silence. Corn and cattle are among the most important articles of consumption; but they are not the only resources of life. This country is so happily situated that both these may fail to a considerable degree, and yet  
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barring impolitic regulations, no famine reach us. We are surrounded by seas and watered by innumerable rivers: yet what is the situation of the fisheries of this country? Look to our northern coasts, in particular, (you might look at every coast) and see what neglect prevails. Consider how long the people of Holland, more industrious and more politic than ourselves, have caught our own fish upon our own shores; salted them, and preserved them; and afterwards sold them to us, at a price extravagantly increased, in diminished quantities. I have dwelt, in a former lecture, upon this subject; and upon the impolitic duties and regulations, with respect to salt. In my lecture upon the genuine means of averting national calamities, I entered considerably into the subject; and, as I have printed that lecture, in the first number of my Tribune, I shall not go into it again. There are some facts, however, not noticed there, which ought not to be passed over in silence.

Some provisions, under pretence of checking the growth of this evil, have been made: but they are very inefficient; and perhaps, were even intended to be so. In Aberystwith, in Wales, in particular, it is common for the fishermen, during the season, to go out in the morning, and catch as many fine cod, and fish of that description, as they think they shall be able to sell in their own market. These they throw upon the beach; and the people, of all descriptions, come down and purchase what they want—the finest large fish at a penny a piece. An attempt was made, some years ago, to raise them to two-pence; and the common people were so indignant, that they threatened insurrection; and the fishermen were obliged to keep them at the old price. My correspondent, from whom I have the anecdote—a person who has sent some literary productions into the world, enquired why they did not catch a large quantity, as they seemed to procure them with so much ease; but he was answered—To what use shall we catch more than we can sell? We can get no cheap salt to keep them with. Upon enquiring what was meant by cheap salt, he found that a regulation had been made, some years ago, which required a given quantity of salt to be sold, without any duty, at the salterns or manufactories in that part of the country; in order that the salting of fish might be encouraged, for the benefit of the poor of that neighbourhood in particular, and of the interior of the island in general. But what was the consequence? Did the poor fishermen, the common class of the people, reap the benefit of this! No. They



They had more wealthy, and more powerful neighbours, whose turn (for they are represented in Parliament) was first to be served; and the swinish disfranchised herd, who have no voice by which their complaints can be made known, were to be deprived of the means of laying up, in the plentiful season, that which might support them in the time of scarcity. A few wealthy individuals, in order to prevent the trade from getting into the hands of these little retail haglers, which they thought would be injurious to their monopolizing plans, contract, regularly, for the whole of the salt that is thus permitted to be sold without duty; and the poor are not permitted to have a single grain of it for their own tables. Thus, instead of the common people salting the fish, and preserving it for themselves, or carrying it to market, the cheap salt is absolutely bought up, and, as it is said, not made use of at all; lest the product of the fisheries, which monopolizing individuals have a particular interest in keeping at as high a price as possible, should get into the hands of the common people, and be sold at reduced prices.

That there are many practices of this kind it is impossible for us to avoid concluding, when we consider the present price of fish; and what it used to be in former times;—when we consider that the inhabitants on the banks of the Severn, where the finest salmon is caught, can rarely get a single fish; and that in almost every place, where these luxuries used to abound, the same complaint is to be heard. The reason is, that the fishermen are under contract with certain great factors, to sell to them the whole of the fish that they catch; and are bound by engagements, to destroy what is not wanted for their limited markets. This statement, at first view, would appear like fiction; but I have the facts from persons who reside in the neighbourhood of the Severn, and who have had opportunities of ascertaining them. I know that, at first blush, it would appear that this is impolitic in the contracting parties; for that the more they sell, the larger would be the profit. But this is not the case. If the individual can obtain any thing like the sum for a tenth part of the commodity, which he would obtain for the whole—If he obtains even the half, he receives a very advanced emolument: because the agents to be employed in the sale, the care to be taken to prevent the whole from being spoiled, the expence of carriage, &c. &c. are much less when he sells a small, than when he sells a very large quantity.

But

But how should any individual have the right of making such regulations? Why should the streams which flow from the liberal urn of nature; which are fed by the waters of heaven, and break their unbidden way through the veins of the earth—those streams which are cultivated by no man—which are stocked by no man—which receive no benefit from this man's capital, or that man's capital—why should they be the property of individuals? Are they not the bounties of nature? and has not every one of nature's children a right to share her bounties? Unless, forsooth, you choose to tell us the great are the only legitimate children of nature, and that the rest are bastardized by those statutes of aggrandizement which have lifted a few to rank, emoluments and distinctions, which the mass can never hope to attain!

Such then are a part, and but a part, of the causes of that increasing dearness of provisions, and consequent misery of the mass of the people, of which we complain. That the effects of these gradually operating causes have lately been very much aggravated by others of a temporary nature, has been already shewn; nor shall I attempt to recapitulate them at this late hour of the evening. Suffice it to say, that, like the present war, with which they are so intimately connected, they may all be traced to the same original spring of action—a systematic aversion in our cabinet to the principles of liberty.

There is one of these topics, however, upon which I slightly touched at the conclusion of the lecture of Wednesday last, that seems to demand more ample notice than I then had time to give it; not only as it is most intimately connected with the immediate subject of these lectures, but as it tends to illustrate, in a most eminent degree, the real character and views of our Ministers. It will be obvious that I allude to the affairs of Poland.

It cannot be unknown to you that Poland, in a very considerable degree, was considered as the granary of Europe. What must have been the consequence of the devastations of last Summer? Consider that this granary of the world, instead of being cultivated by the peaceful plough-share, has been rent by the iron scythe of military tyranny;—that the industrious peasants, who used to cultivate the soil, have been prevented from that cultivation by the trumpet, which has called them to arms; by the gnawing thought, that what they produced another might reap; that the sons of Liberty might plow the earth, but that the demons of Despotism might come with



with their scythes and claim the rich harvest, and carry that which ought to have supported a race of men proud of hard-earned independence, into the granaries of northern savages, whose only refinement is slaughter, and whose only appetite, blood and cruelty.

Consider also the devastations of war which have raged through that fine country. Consider the extent to which this calamity has been diffused during that struggle, whose glorious energy, and whose prospects of success, so frequently cheered my heart, while confined within the mansions of the Tower, at a time when prospects of the happiness of other countries were the only consolations of the generous Briton;—for every thing at home laid tamely prostrate at the feet of a despotic faction.—Poor devoted Poland! you might have calculated largely upon the hardships and calamities you had to struggle with; but you had one enemy which, perhaps, never entered into your speculations. You did not expect that corruption would be employed by a British minister, to blast and palsy your glorious efforts; and to string with increased energy the tyrannic arm of the Prussian despot!

Citizens, this conduct of the minister of this country—this underhanded exertion to crush the liberties of Poland, discover to you a dismal secret. If you reflect, it will unfold to you the real objects which that minister has in view. Compare this conduct with the conduct of those ministers in the time of Charles II. who, it is now universally admitted, aimed at the establishment of despotism. What conduct did they pursue? Wherever the dawn of liberty was to be discovered, there the British cabinet found a foe. The republic of Holland felt the eternal hostility of the British court. Why? Because the flame of liberty, such as it was in Holland, was thought to be inimical to the project of Charles's ministers for extinguishing the remaining spark of liberty in Britain. Therefore it was that attempts were made to destroy republican Holland. Therefore it was that a Stadtholder was forced upon that people. Therefore it was that Charles's ministers intrigued with the despot of France, for the destruction and overthrow of Holland. That destruction he did not effect; for, just at the time when the brave Batavians, despairing of being able to defend their country, were about to embark, and transport themselves to the East-Indies, the genius of British liberty burst forth, and compelled the the court of Britain to alter its detestable measures.

Compare

Compare these facts with the conduct of our ministers in the present struggle on the continent. Why should the minister of this country, who deals forth his hypocritical admiration of the constitution of this country, be hostile to the liberties of the Poles? They were not Jacobins. They did not proclaim *liberty* and *equality*. They did not erect guillotines. They did not pretend that *sans Culottism* was to be the basis of their constitution. They did not venture (they were not enlightened enough—they were not wise enough—if they had, they would have triumphed!)—they did not venture to proclaim the equal rights of man. They did not attempt to set up a government, in which every individual should have an equal share in the appointment of the legislature. They were not Robespierrists:—they were not even republicans! Why then was there such animosity on the part of the British cabinet against the Polish revolution?—Citizens—Citizens! I fear we shall be compelled to conclude, that the real hatred of our ministers is not against republicanism, but against liberty; not against Jacobinism, but against the least shadow and appearance of independency, and the rights of human beings; a settled abhorrence for every thing like free, just, and humane laws.

O hypocrisy! how transparent is thy veil!—Pitt pretends to approve of limited monarchy: yet Poland attempted to establish a limited monarchy, and Pitt subsidized a German despot to counteract the attempt; and this very Pitt has since told you in the House of Commons (for the audacity of some men is equal to their profligacy!) that if he had been aware of the use to which the subsidies *he* granted would be applied, he would nevertheless have subsidized the King of Prussia. We have therefore his own authority for pronouncing that he was at least friendly to the subjugation of the brave and virtuous Poles. But for this subsidy, it is clear Prussia could not have resisted the brave efforts of the gallant *Kosciusko*. He did not resist them effectually at last. He felt (and trembled while he felt) the zeal, the ardour of that brave peasant.—Yes, *peasant* I will call him; for *Kosciusko*, like *Stanhope*, was an aristocrat only by birth: he could perceive that the peasantry are the life, the soul, the existence of society; and therefore he gloried in the character, and assumed the appearance; like a peasant he fought—like a peasant he conquered—and, at last, like a peasant fell—to *chains* indeed! to *anguish*! but not to *infamy*. No: he fell *from prosperity*; but he rose *to glory*. His name will be resounded; his memory will be



beloved. Posterity will bow adoration to his bust, when *Pitt* and all his dependants, are swept down the tide of oblivion; or if their names are preserved, will only be preserved to infamy.

O Poland! Poland!—Yes there was a time when the friends of liberty might flatter themselves with a hope, that not the General of the Poles, but the *despot* of Prussia (for it is now no longer treason to speak of him as he deserves!) would have felt the galling of chain. But, alas! the gold of Britain enabled him to hold out till the Russian barbarians were ready to take the field.

The Russian!—How my blood curdles at the name! O Poland! O exhausted country! O depopulated Warsaw! whose brave exertions against one despot had robbed thee of the energy that should have defended thee against another!—what heart bleeds not for thy fate! Behold the fiend *Zuwarrow*, hot from scenes of massacre and cruelty, where Ismael's sons groaned and bled, by thousands, at his command; nor even Circassia's daughters, the beauties of the east, no, nor the smiling infants at the breast escaped his butchering knife. *Zuwarrow* comes, and Warsaw's streets groan beneath his blood-stained steps. And thou, Imperial Dæmon! thou cursed Hyæna of the north, thou pouredst thy savage fury in his soul, and gavest the dagger edge.

Thus Poland fell. It sunk beneath the sanguinary grasp; and scenes of bloodshed and horror marked its fall. Liberty expired; humanity groaned; the hero and his bride; the infant and his parent fell together, in one promiscuous carnage. Such are the triumphs—such the humanity of that regular government, by whose assistance Order and Justice are to be restored in France.

What then was the consequence of this subsidy to Poland? Desolation and massacre. What was the consequence to Britain? The produce of that country, which, if our Cabinet had yielded to the wishes of the people, for the people's hearts were with the Poles (where the heart of the Minister was—if, indeed, he has such a thing, which may be called in question).—The produce of that country, which might have been sent into our ports—that abundance which might have relieved our distresses, is gone. It is not only *robbed from us*: It is destroyed, annihilated. It is worse than *lost to us*; worse than *fallen into the hands of our enemies*. It has fallen into the wide womb of non-entity: it has perished, and we can

can never recover it. Is this then—this Machiavelian policy of our rulers, not connected with the causes of our calamities?

We were told, at a former period, when our blessed Sovereign had the misfortune to labour under certain derangements of his transcendent intellects—we were told by the right reverend fathers in God, the Bishops in conclave assembled—and what right reverend Bishops tell us who shall venture to call in question?—we were told, that the crimes of the people had caused the calamities of the Sovereign. Whether this be true or no, I shall not dispute. I do not pretend to be as well versed in the occult sciences, as the reverend bench of Bishops. But this I know, that whether the crimes of the people produced the calamities of the Sovereign or not, the crimes of his Majesty's Ministers frequently produce the calamities both of prince and people.

Thus in the time of Charles I. when the *apostate Wentworth*, once a bawling advocate for liberty, became minister of the crown, and Earl of Strafford, we find that his bad policy brought the nation into a civil war, and the Sovereign to the block. We find, also, that when *Louis XVI.* yielded the reins of government to that profligate wretch, *Calonne*, that *Calonne*, by his arts and intrigues, plunged the country into bankruptcy and misery; and afterwards, his intrigues plunged *Louis XVI.* into perjury, and eventually the country into anarchy: an anarchy which Pitt and his coadjutors would persuade you was occasioned by the friends of liberty; but which, in reality, was occasioned by the intrigues of the friends of despotism: by the cabals of that wretch *Calonne*, the crimes him, of Condè, and Artois, and the profligacy of the court of France.

Citizens, I am no advocate for the doctrine of constructive treason. But if it could be admitted, must we not determine that those ministers are guilty of high treason, who seeing the effects of this misconduct, pursue precisely the same line of conduct, which *Calonne* and the apostate *Wentworth* had pursued before.

The fact is, Citizens, that the worst calamities of every nation result from the profligacy of ministers. Ever careless of the welfare of the people, and ever grasping to increase revenue and the wages of corruption, they continue the ravages of oppression, till the energies and resources of the country are exhausted, and desolation appears in every corner. And mark how that corruption has swelled of late among us. See the torrent which it has spread over the country. Once it



was a little rippling stream, it played and murmured round the purlieus of the court; in time it became a spreading river; now a mighty torrent, it has burst its banks, and swelling like another Nile, has drowned the nation in one general inundation: and behold the half-formed monsters of vice, of misery, and luxurious deformity, which rise from its polluted slime!

Yes, Citizens, there was a time when corruption had its bounds; when one place was sufficient for one man. But now, so intrepid becomes the honesty of our courtiers, so zealous and enthusiastic are they in preserving the rights of the people, so much additional energy have they acquired, that to sap their independence requires not one place only, but a dozen, before they will consent to support the measures of the court, and become hostile to the welfare of the people. I shall not attempt to illustrate this by enumerating all the places possessed by *Pitt* and his family in England, by *Dundas* and his family in Scotland, or by *Beresford* and his family in Ireland. In short, such is the power and patronage grasped by these three worthless beings, that England, Scotland and Ireland seem to contain but three men; each of whom, if you touch but the hair of his head, or threaten to remove him from his places, even though you leave him his salaries and emoluments, can threaten you with a civil war, and, perhaps, the wreck and ruin of the whole government.

From this monopoly of places arises another misfortune. For you know *ministers must be supported*; and if they monopolize all the old places to themselves, they must create so many more new places for their dependants. Thus we find, that instead of two Secretaries of State, we have three: all *principal Secretaries of State*, though one of them, forsooth, is hardly permitted to sign his name to a warrant of any description, unless it be to arrest a Jacobinical fellow for high treason, without permission from his high and mighty master and coadjutor, *Dundas*.

As to the creation of lesser places, it were in vain to enumerate these—Boards of Controul, Offices of *Police*, and Boards of Agriculture, with salaries for apostate secretaries; and I know not what. I will refer you, however, for an instance to the Tower, where if you should have the good fortune to experience the same opportunities of information that I have had, you may learn, that in consequence of the economical arrangements of that great reformer, the Duke of Richmond, wherever there are three labourers doing any sort of work, there are always six clerks to see that they do it.

I beg

—I beg pardon, Citizens, I have been guilty of a slight inaccuracy in this statement: the language of the Tower is, that wherever there are three labourers doing *nothing*, there must always be six clerks to see that it is done. Then we must take into consideration, also, the increase of pensions and secret service money; and the compromises which the ministry coming in always makes with the ministry going out. Once it was thought sufficient, when one set of rogues—I beg your pardon—I meant to say ministers went out, for the other set who came in to promise them indemnity; and that they would not impeach them, and bring them to the block. But now, indemnity! they will say with a sneer—indemnity! holding their hands behind them as they retire—I must have something besides indemnity, or I will become so flaming a Patriot, I will not only oppose your measures, but blow up the whole system—let the people into the secrets of office, and make your places not worth your holding. Your contracts, your monopolies, your discounts upon subsidies, your pensions from foreign Courts, all shall be exposed.—Indemnity, indeed! I say indemnity! Give me a good pension, and I will oppose you only in a parliamentary way. But if you do'nt, take care of me, I shall grow desperate, and

“ Let in the light to Pluto's drear abodes,

“ Abhorr'd by men, and hateful e'en to Gods.”

If you want authority for all this, I refer you to Fitzwilliam's letters; and if he does not say the same thing in other words, I have no wit in decyphering the courtly character.

That this inordinate growth of corruption is the spring and fountain head of all our calamities cannot be doubted: for it is clear and evident that this corruption, as it leads to waste, extravagance, and dissipation, as it leads to the decrease of productive labour, and an increase of those inordinate burthens and taxes that consume the profits of productive labour, must tend to increase the price of the necessities of life.

For evils like these, where shall we seek for redress? From tumult and violence? From destroying market houses, and breaking open the shops of butchers and bakers? fie, fie, fie! Can imagination be so dull as to suppose that outrage and tumult can redress calamities so enormous. A little partial evil may, perhaps, sometimes get redress from these criminal exertions; but calamities so great require the peaceful but determined energies of the national mind!—A loud, a fervid, and resolute remonstrance with our rulers. And a union and  
association



association among ourselves that may command the respect of those, who have the boldness to despise our individual efforts. We must lay the axe deep to the root of the evil, and not suffer our attention to be diverted by tearing the lesser branches. The plain and simple fact is, that the happiness of the lower and middling orders of society, (for let us not be so deluded as to suppose, that the lower orders can be oppressed and the middle orders not feel the oppression!) the great body of the people are neglected, because the great body of the people are not represented in the legislature; and those who make the laws are not at all dependent upon their favour or approbation.

If you will have redress, seek it quietly, but seek it firmly. Redress the evils of corruption, by reforming the source of corruption.

There is no redress for a country situated as we are, but by restoring to the people their right of universal suffrage and annual parliaments: rights which nature dictates, and which no law can take away: rights which the constitution of this country has stamped with approbation; and which, if we wish for happiness and prosperity, we must seek to restore: for the plain and simple fact cannot be more concisely expressed, than in those words in which I have so often repeated it, that "there is no redress for a country situated as we are, but from a fair, full, and equal representation of the people in the Commons House of Parliament."

\* \* \* No. XIX. containing the Lecture "On Barracks and Fortifications, with sketches on the character and treatment of the British Soldiery," will be published Saturday the 22d of August.

## THE HAMLET.

*(FROM THE PERIPATETIC.)*

O! how sweet at the hour when, deep-blushing, appears  
 The sun's swelling orb at the brink of the sky,  
 And Eve, pensive Eve, bathes the vale with her tears,  
 And Zephyr, sad Zephyr, expires in a sigh—  
 O! how sweet at this hour, when half-wearied with toil,  
 And each kind emotion awak'd in the breast  
 That Heav'n's varied bounties and Nature's gay smile  
 Ere stamp'd on the mind that by Fancy is blest—  
 O! how sweet, at this hour, on the brow of some hill,  
 By side the clear brook, or embower'd in the vale,  
 Directed, perhaps, by the clack of the mill,  
 Or Milkmaid's blithe carol, who sings o'er her pail,  
 To approach the lone hamlet, our labours to close,  
 And share the tir'd peasant's contented repose!  
 O! how sweet, when each warbler that trill'd from the spray,  
 Or to Heav'n's azure concave with rapture aspir'd  
 (The tir'd pinion relax'd, hush'd in silence the lay)  
 To the grove's covert shade with his mate has retir'd:  
 How sweet, as around every cottage they play,  
 (As you wind thro' the lane or the meadow) to hear  
 The rude ruddy infants attune the wild lay!—  
 What chorus so sweet to Humanity's ear?  
 —Sport on, thoughtless babes! ah, yet sport and be gay,  
 Enjoy the short rapture, and hail the bright glow!  
 Nor reflect ('twere in vain) on the heels of the day  
 Tread Night and her shadows—tread Manhood and Woe!  
 Ah! too near is the time that your sorrow assures—  
 When toil and Affliction alone shall be yours!  
 But see from the furrow, the glebe, and the plough,  
 The peasants return with the toil-sullied brow:  
 To their rest they return, to their scanty repast;  
 For the hour of refreshment relieves them at last.  
 As hither with toil-wearied steps they repair,  
 Hark what lisps and what shouts their loud welcome declare;  
 While, their sports broken off, how the innocents fly,  
 And clasp each hard hand with a transport of joy;  
 Or hang by the coat, as around them they throng,  
 And lend their small efforts to drag them along.  
 Each grief these endearments from memory blot,  
 And the cares of the day, and its toils are forgot;  
 Till again to their dames, o'er their scantling of ale,  
 As they eat their brown bread, they supply the short tale:  
 Then to bed they retire, their adventures to close,  
 To taste (be they sweet!) the short boons of repose;  
 While the wealthy and proud in mad riot and joy  
 The fruits of their labour and hardships destroy.

Now



Now silence succeeds to the bustle of day,  
 And the Moon's silver orb to the Sun's ruddy beam;  
 Awhile thro' the dews let me pensively stray,  
 And indulge soothing Fancy awhile in her dream.  
 While the Nightingale trills, your sweet minstrel divine!  
 Let me pierce, O ye Fays! your sequester'd retreat;  
 With your Shakespeare, your Colins, your Fletcher recline;  
 Your revels enjoy, and your fables repeat.  
 Ah, why are ye fled, gentle Fays! from the Muse,  
 Whose songs ye adorn'd, and whose lessons improv'd?  
 Are ye fear'd that stern critics their sanction refuse?—  
 Dull spectres of Night by malignity mov'd!  
 Ah, scorn their dark malice, renew the wild strain;  
 And give us our Fletchers and Shakespeares again.  
 Such—such are my joys, in lone hamlet retir'd,  
 When the toil of the day, and its pleasures are o'er.—  
 Or, perhaps, with the throng by *rude Nature* inspir'd  
 I share the blithe cup, and their feelings explore.  
 Ah! little ye know, who, envelop'd by pride,  
 Alone the dull pastimes of Grandeur behold,  
 What life, and what fancy, and humour reside  
 In these circles of Mirth by no Fashion control'd.  
 How oft have I smil'd ('twas the smile of the heart,  
 Not the simper of Form, by Hypocrisy taught;  
 The mask of dull Custom, the effort of Art  
 To escape, but in vain, from the torture of Thought.)  
 How oft have I smil'd, their shrewd maxims to hear,  
 And see the strong traits of wild Nature appear!  
 Let the proud and the weak, then, the dull and the great,  
 Who loll in their coaches in indolent state,  
 Who idle at home, but for idleness stray,  
 And abroad only prize what's at home every day—  
 Let to these the proud inn yield its splendour and down,  
 And the Country repeat the dull pleasures of Town.  
 Let me, whom each pleasure eccentric can move,  
 Who would travel to *know* and would live to *improve*,  
 When at eve my tir'd limbs relaxation require,  
 To some snug little thatch, in some hamlet, retire;  
 Where, the cravings of Nature content to supply,  
 I may hear, or may join in the hind's rustic joy—  
 May Man in his varied conditions compare,  
 And learn the hard lot which too many must bear;  
 That thus as with all I alternately blend,  
 The *mind* may expand, and the *heart* may amend;  
 Till embracing Mankind in one girdle of Love,  
 In Nature's kind lesson I daily improve,  
 And (no haughty distinctions to fetter my soul)  
 As the brother of all, learn to feel for the whole.

## THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XIX.

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THE LECTURE "On BARRACKS and FORTIFICATIONS; with sketches of the character and treatment of the BRITISH SOLDIERY." delivered Wednesday, June 10th, 1795.

### CITIZENS,

THE subject that claims your attention this evening is the modern Ministerial rage for Barracks and Fortifications; with sketches of the character and treatment of the British Soldiery; and an enquiry into the genuine modes of national defence.

At the very outset of the consideration of this subject, it naturally suggests itself to us to enquire, *What are the real characteristics of the British nation?* and what have been the means and sources of her former strength and greatness? If we look to history we shall find, that the strength and grandeur of this country has always depended, not upon its military force, but upon its navy; and, if we enquire a little further, we shall be disposed to consider, that this circumstance does not depend upon any thing peculiar in the character of the British people,—not upon any difference in the original conformation of Englishmen, from the conformation of men of other nations:—for the plain and simple fact is, however historians may attempt to seduce us into a contrary belief, that Britons are but men, and that the inhabitants of all other countries are to be considered as men also, partaking of the same common nature, feelings, capacities, affections, and powers of mind and body: that they are, in fact, of one and the same family; and bound therefore by the same universal laws of nature and affection. We must look then not to the conformation of the British mind, nor to the conformation of the bodily constitution of Britons, for any thing either glorious or censurable, in the former history of Britain; but we must look to the circumstances in which the country has been placed, either with respect to its natural situation, institutions

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of



of Government, or casual introduction of information and science for any differences of character or conduct among the people of this nation.

The plain and simple fact then is, that our situation in the universe has pointed out to us the peculiar character we ought to be most anxious to cultivate, both as to our peaceable pursuits, and the vindication of our rights against external foes.

Other countries, which form a part of the Continent, are, from the very nature of their situation, compelled to cultivate the military science: because they are, at all times, open to attacks from neighbouring enemies; and if they had not that martial characteristic among them, which enables them to defend their frontiers, the imaginary lines that may be drawn upon a map, or those more important barriers erected by the professors of tactics would but ill defend them against the ambition of conquest and dominion, so long as the present mischievous system, begot in Courts, and nurtured by ministerial intrigue, the system of war, shall continue to curse and torment the universe.

Happily for this country (had Ministers understood its happiness) we are situated in a different manner. The ocean has formed a rampart, more powerful than alps and fortresses, to defend us from those hostile attacks to which other nations are subjected; and thus has separated us, if we were wise enough to make use of the advantage, from the broils and politics of the other nations of Europe.

What a source of happiness does this offer to us! and how madly have we dashed the cup of felicity from our lips, and drained the bitter draught of voluntary misery even to the very dregs!

Certainly there is no country in Europe that has so excellent an opportunity of keeping itself perpetually at peace, as Britain; no country so little concerned in the phantastic *balance of power*; no nation that has had so few real occasions to see her children orphans in the streets, and her widows lamenting their husbands slain in the field of battle. Unfortunately, however, the country best calculated to remain in eternal peace, has not only been the most signal for frequent wars; but, from a destructive ambition reigning in her Court, and a melancholy defect in her institutions, which enables her Ministers to profit most when havoc and uproar rage with the greatest fury, has too frequently been the cause of provoking war throughout the universe; and keeping Europe, Asia,  
and

and the West, in one continued strife of carnage and desolation.

This conduct, with respect to *the people*, who have been made subservient to it, may, perhaps, in some degree be accounted for from one of the worst dispositions that degrades the human character—a disposition to be indifferent to those calamities from which, by personal situation, we are ourselves secured.

These ramparts, raised by the billows of the ocean, have rendered us strangers, as it were, to the real calamities of war. We feel the burdens of taxation, it is true; and we feel them at this time cold and heavy, almost, as the iron hand of death, ready to crush us into non-existence. But we do not behold those ravages which other countries frequently experience. Our “burning villages do not light us in many a midnight march;” nor does “trenching war channel our fields, nor bruise our flowerets with the armed hoofs of hostile paces.” The fields cultivated for our support, are not laid waste by those aggressions that have reduced many parts of the Continent to worse than deserts.—Unfortunately for mankind,—nay permit me to say, and even for ourselves, we are too little acquainted with the real mischiefs produced by this system of war we are so fond of; and, remaining secure at home—that is to say—our statesmen, aristocrats, and rich traders, remaining secure at home, and partaking of no part of the danger, send their fellow citizens, without remorse, to be butchered in foreign climes, and to spread over other nations that devastation from which this country has, *hitherto*, been happily secured.

But let us not deceive ourselves: We no longer can remain secure, if we persist in this scheme of frantic ambition, which must ultimately bring upon us the just hatred and detestation of the world. Proud of our situation; unfeeling, alike from this pride, and from this happiness, we have arrogated to ourselves a ridiculous dominion over the ocean: forgetting that first great principle of justice, that the bounty which results from no man's labour, that bounty which never can be exhausted, but offers a peaceful and eternal source of wealth to all mankind, never, as Gregoire has observed in his excellent report on the rights of nations, never can be the property of any man or any nation. It is a common good owing its existence and its advantages to no one. It is therefore, the common inheritance of all the children of na-



ture; and we must prove that the inhabitants of other parts of the universe are not men, or we can have no right to arrogate to ourselves the exclusive possession of this grand and magnificent inheritance.

But thus arrogating to ourselves the dominion of the ocean, we have not been satisfied with the fruits which that dominion gives. It is the natural tendency of all evil passions, when once gratified, to stimulate fresh desires still more vicious and inordinate. Those who have obtained a monopoly of any kind, and persuaded themselves that it is their right, grasp immediately at a still wider monopoly, and soon persuade themselves that the universe itself was made for them.

Not satisfied with the empire of the ocean, the Indies must be subjugated to our mercantile ambition; the western world must yield its neck to the yoke of British usurpation; and Africa must be depopulated, and her sooty sons, loaded with chains and fetters, must cultivate for us those luxuries which have, in reality, undermined our independence, and sapped that energy of soul which can only be cherished by simplicity and virtue.

These undertakings have been but too successful in the eyes of Courts and Ministers. They have, it is true, increased the misery of the lower orders of society! they have added to the burdens of the great mass of the people! (an opinion to illustrate which I need only appeal to the historical fact, quoted in my Lectures on the Dearth and Scarcity of Provisions, that a larger quantity of the enjoyments of life were formerly procured by a smaller proportion of labour)—they have driven the multitude to a lower state of misery! but they have increased the dominion, patronage, and grandeur of office; they have increased the prosperity and monopoly of a few great families who have risen to power and opulence by the pillage of the nation!

Yes, by these great and glorious exploits, tho' the people are shrinking in bonds and wretchedness, they have increased *this* grandeur and prosperity; and have enabled the individuals, thus advanced, to lay additional weights and restrictions upon those people; who, but for this ridiculous pomp of patronage, might be enabled, with bold independence, to lift up their heads and, to the front of grandeur and oppression proclaim, We are your equals, as individual men; as an aggregate body, we are your superiors; and you who call yourselves

our

our masters, are servants, whose duty it is to administer to our happiness. It is for this you are paid; for this you are supported in state and luxury; for this that every labourer among us, even to the lowest drudge, whom you have the insolence to despise, contents to bestow upon you a part of *that property which his toil has created.*

These fatal successes also have begot a lust of dominion in the country, which is, unfortunately, too generally felt even by the great mass of the people, to whom its fruit is nothing but increase of slavery. Hence the poor wretch shivering in nakedness, hence the poor soldier, who toils and bleeds for a scanty maintenance, talks of the glory and grandeur of his country—talks of foreign conquests and great exploits, without remembering that the only advantages to him are wounds and disease; a family left to beggary, and himself an outcast from that society of which he ought to be a member; and which, while he thinks he is protecting it, he is assisting to enslave and ruin.

Citizens, It is in vain that we attempt to disguise the truth. We may dress our opinions in as many pompous ornaments as we please; but these attempts at external grandeur, so much beyond the inherent strength and powers of the nation, must beget, and have begot—internal weakness. Hence we no longer feel that bold and manly consequence, which occasioned Britons once to suppose, that their fleets were their only bulwarks, and their breasts, burning with the enthusiasm of liberty and independence, the only fortifications necessary to secure this country, and protect its liberty and its prosperity. Feeling this internal weakness, but unwilling to confess it, our Ministers have at once amused, and abused with a heap of ridiculous plans and projects, to supply, by adventitious aid, that which can only depend upon the internal virtues of the soul. Hence the *Duke of Richmond's* ridiculous project of building fortifications all round the coast; and thus walling out the ocean, I suppose: for the ocean is the only enemy that walls of earth and stone can keep away. To think of protecting the country by these castles built with cards—for card castles would be of as much importance as the castles his Grace of Richmond has planned. To expect, by these ridiculous, weak, expiring expedients, to protect a country which once looked to its own heart for its protection, and wished for no vigour and no energy but that which the honest feelings of independence could impart to its martial arm. To think, I say, of prolonging the existence of such  
a coun-



a country, by such means, shews that the disease is not merely corporeal; that the nobler parts have yielded to the assault: and that the intellects are as much enfeebled as the fibre.

You remember, Citizens, that this plan of general fortification was rejected by the casting vote of the Speaker.—With one puff of air he blew down all the fine projects which his Grace had so long been forming; the palfeboard machinery sunk thro' the trap doors of St. Stephen's Theatre, and lo and behold, the scene in the pantomime being changed, you were presented with the comic spectacle of my Uncle Toby, with his crutch upon his shoulder, exercising his imaginary troops, and storming ideal castles upon his Bowling Green.

But the noble projector was not thus to be disappointed. Though the Parliament had rejected his plan for a general fortification—and it is a woeful picture of the energy and virtue of that Parliament, to reflect that it was only rejected by a casting voice! Though thus rejected, he knew that there was another assembly, which was not always known, it is true, to have the power of adopting, in parties, what the Parliament had in toto rejected, but in which no majority would oppose him, where it was proposed that he should try his hand upon a narrower scale.

Unanimity—unanimity, you know, is the favorite maxim of Cabinets; and they would be unfit to share the power and the patronage of a great nation, who would quarrel among themselves about such a trifling circumstance as the expenditure of a few millions of the public money. They saw that the poor man had fixed his heart upon it, and so, lest he should take on and fret himself about it, they even saddled his hobby-horse, *at the public expence*, and let him canter away at his pleasure.

Fortifications have accordingly started up all over the country: particularly at Portsmouth; where any man who has the disposition, and an hour or two's leisure, may have as fine an opportunity of laughing at the expensive absurdities with which his Grace has chosen to saddle the nation, as any man who wishes to amuse himself at his own cost could desire. There you may behold immense fortifications, which must have cost millions of money, so magnificent and so capacious, that all the troops in British pay would not be numerous enough to man them. There you may behold port-holes stopped up with cannon placed behind them, and port-holes that are open without any cannon at all.

But

But, Citizens, how comes it that these great projects are thus neglected? Is it that his Grace of Richmond and his fortifications are now the common jest of all the country, and that the people, in their risibility, forget the millions upon millions which they have paid for the support of them, and for which they pay a dearer price for the bread that goes into their mouths for the meat that should supply the strength and vigour for their frame?—Surely we cannot suspect any part of the British Cabinet of such weakness as attending either to the ridicule, or the complaints of the swinish multitude? How comes it then that these great projects have been neglected? Certainly this does not arise from his Grace having been—I was going to say drummed out of the ministerial regiment—but it matters not in what sort of manner I describe it—from his Grace being no longer in that place of power which he formerly filled with so much lustre—a lustre which nothing but the wisdom and virtue of his first female progenitor could outvie. This I say is not the cause, for this neglect began to be conspicuous before his Grace had thought of resigning his post.

The fact is, that internal danger called off the attention of his Grace from the external means of defence; and he was obliged to neglect the fortifications at Portsmouth, to direct the whole energies of his powerful mind towards securing and fortifying the Tower of London, in which, by a sort of divine forecast, he perceived that Traitors of a most dangerous description were by and by to be concealed. And as he knew very well that nothing but strong fortification could resist the furious assaults of Conventional Reformers, he made the Bastille of London so strong that it would now almost resist an army of eight and forty bridewell boys for eight and forty hours.

Yes, Citizens, from sapient projects of external security, ministerial attention was called to the dangerous perils that threatened the internal safety of THEIR constitution. Places and pensions were declared in a state of siege. Sinécures, honours, and emoluments were likely to be invaded; the fortifications of patronage and corruption were like to have been thrown down. The coronet seemed to totter upon the empty head, and the star to tremble at the hollow heart. To avert these horrors—to resist this danger, his Grace of Richmond and his coadjutors hastened with patriotic zeal, and Portsmouth and its fortifications were left to finish and defend themselves.

New



New dangers require new means of security. And barracks were now to be every where erected, in which the soldiery, shut up out of the hearing of the profane jargon of jacobinical reformers, may repose in ease and quiet; and be starved for want of that assistance from the great mass of the people which they might otherwise derive.

But, Citizens, I will venture to prophecy, that of all the projects of the present administration, and surely no administration was ever more fruitful of projects of a particular description, there never was one so fraught with danger to the peace, liberty, and happiness of the country—there never was one so replete with unconstitutional violations of every principle that has long been dear to this country, as this of burying the British Soldiery alive in Barracks: the alarming attempt to separate the soldiery from that mass of fellow citizens of whom they are a part; to whom they are allied; and whom it is their duty to protect in the full enjoyment of their liberty and happiness, and not to be made the instruments of their oppression and ruin. But the honest soldiery of Britain will not be so deluded. Duty, generous affection—interest alike forbid it: for if the people are ruined and oppressed, what are the soldiery but a part of the people? Their ruin, their oppression, their misery must be the consequence; with the aggravated horror of reflecting that, by securing the misery of their fellow citizens, they have paved the way to their own chains and destruction. Will they consent to forge base fetters for their free-born countrymen; and then, for their reward, like the military machines of German Despots, be sold like beasts in the public market, and hired out like assassins to deeds of murder, for the benefit of a lawless Court.

Citizens, you will remember—every individual acquainted with the history of the country will remember, the precautions taken by our ancestors, to prevent the possibility of a separation of interests and feelings between the soldiery and the great mass of the people. One of the precautions to prevent this, and to preserve a perpetual remembrance that every soldier is in reality a citizen, and that it is the country he is to defend, and not two or three people of high rank and office, who too frequently send this soldiery to be butchered, to promote their ambition—one of these jealous precautions was the total preclusion of a standing army. I say the total preclusion of a standing army: for I mean boldly to assert, for I am ready to prove, that a standing army is not only no  
part

part of the constitution, but it is a direct violation of that constitution. And mark, by a standing army of this country, I mean an army of individuals, who, having once received the pay of Government, are therefore considered as having become slaves for life; without the power of ever laying down their arms again, if they wish to withdraw from the profession; and without a power in the people to disband them, whenever the termination of war renders it no longer necessary that their occupation should be continued; and to restore them, with proper reward, with affection, thanks, and esteem, into the bosoms of their friends and families.

To preclude the necessity of this standing army, it will be remembered, that an expedient of the utmost wisdom and propriety was invented; that of arming a certain proportion, or, upon occasion, the whole inhabitants of the country, under the denomination of a militia: an army which was always within the controul of the people; whose officers were originally appointed by the districts in which they were raised, and who thereby became the soldiers of the people, and not the soldiers of the Court. When men are the soldiers of the people, they will defend the people; when they are the soldiers of the Court, the Court will attempt to persuade them that they have an interest separate from the people; and therefore liberty cannot be secured in so firm a manner, in any other way, as by arming the people themselves, alternately, man after man, every one taking his share of the risk and burthen, to defend the great interests of the people. Thus, by dismissing them in their turns, to mix with that body of the people, whom they have at one time stepped forward to defend, and taking others to be trained to the use of arms, you in a considerable degree, at the same time that you take care that every soldier shall be a citizen, make every citizen a soldier. That is, you teach every man the use of arms: and every man being equally able to defend himself, it will be impossible for any faction, either of clubs which designing alarmists pretend to dread, or borough-mongers which the nation at large has so much reason to dread, to over-awe the honest majority of the nation. By this means, also, you prevent those scenes of desolation, with which the struggles of the people, to get rid of tyranny, is at all times sure to be attended.

Citizens, it is impossible to be blind to the great consequences that result from this system. It is impossible to avoid seeing, that every soldier, being only a soldier for a time, must have a common interest with the people: It is impossible



to avoid seeing, that, by this means, every citizen will alternately stand a chance of procuring a knowledge of the use of arms. And, on the other hand, that it will be impossible for any separate faction to trample upon the rights and happiness of the great body of the people. But there is another thing of great consequence and importance, relative to this part of the argument, which may, perhaps, command, and which certainly ought to command, the attention of Ministers. It is impossible to avoid seeing, that, by adopting these means, you are in reality more secure from foreign invasion, than you can be from any standing army: because, then, the whole body of the people become soldiers, and every individual is ready and able to step forward to the frontiers, and expose his bosom against those who attempt to invade his country, to pillage his little property, and to destroy those comforts which his useful industry has procured for himself and family.

But, if we pursue the thread of history, we shall find that the House of Stuart, particularly after their *disgraceful restoration*, contributed, in a very considerable degree, to the invasion of this great security of constitutional liberty. That is to say, when this country was unfortunately struck with such blindness and infatuation, as to restore Charles II. to that absolute dominion, for usurping which they had justly deprived his father Charles I. of his life, that profligate tyrant seeing that despotism was no way to be attained, but by rendering a small part of the people capable of coercing the great body; seeing that it was impossible to persuade the great majority of the country to surrender their liberties, but that he must work his way by a minority, he took precautions to establish a standing army: that is to say, he took certain citizens from out of the great mass of the people, stripped them of their liberty, stripped them of their right of free agency, stripped them of the power of returning to their families, and living in peace, tranquillity and ease, and thus (from the scanty pay which he took care to give them—much better, however, proportionately, than they receive now) keeping them in a state of dependency upon his *bounty*, made them fit instruments of whatever oppression he might think fit to exercise against *his* people.

Unfortunately, at the time of the Revolution, the liberties of this country (such was the degraded situation of Britain!) were thought not any longer capable of being secured by the arms of the people alone; and therefore the Whigs and the Tories

Tories coalesced together, and brought over a foreign King, protected by a foreign army, and thus, in reality, foisted a band of mercenaries upon the nation; who, however good, however excellent the cause in which they were brought, were, notwithstanding that, still to be considered with a jealous eye, as being mercenaries; and to be considered as having, in some degree, the power of treating us like a conquered people; tho', from the principles upon which this Revolution was said to have been conducted, it ought certainly to have established our liberties upon such broad and general principles, as to have restored the people to the right and honour of defending themselves, and to have stripped all mercenaries of the power of daring to interfere with the concerns of this powerful nation.

Citizens, it is impossible to do justice, by way of digression, to the innumerable mischiefs that result from the interference of any foreign power in the concerns of any nation. There is nothing so diabolical in the whole system of Machiavelian politics, as the attempt of one country to interfere with the internal concerns of another. If the people are disposed to change and alter the mode of their government, or to alter the dynasty of their Kings, they have a right so to do. And if they are disposed unanimously, or by a great majority so to do, they have the power of doing it. But no party or set of men ought to attempt to enforce any change or alteration upon the people, which the people are not, by a decided majority, inclined to adopt. Here, therefore, is one evil, that must necessarily result from any revolution effected by foreign arms, that you never know, in the first place, whether it is the revolution of a faction, or the revolution of the great body of the people; and, in the next place, it is sure to be accompanied with a degree of undue, and undefined power, produced by mercenary coercion, which is eminently injurious to that large and liberal principle of liberty, which the progress of reason, and the enlightened spirit of a nation will be able to procure, when no foreign interference is courted, or permitted.

This was particularly the case with respect to the event I am now speaking of. And William III. having been seated on the throne by a foreign force, and having parted with his Dutch Guards, not without exclaiming, "By God if I had a son these guards should not be sent back;" took the opportunity which the ambiguous circumstances of this revolution afforded to fortify his authority by a standing army:



and thus, one of the first fruits of this *glorious Revolution* was the establishment of a standing army, more numerous than the Stewarts themselves had ever upheld.

But we have not got to the end of the chapter yet. The invasion of the constitutional rights of the people, by a standing army, was in the first instance small; and it was found necessary not only to extend this military establishment, but also to oppress the poor soldiers, who were to be the instruments of those persons, before the grand views and objects of courts could be well effected. Accordingly, in the reign of *Queen Anne*, when a very large increase took place in the military establishment, an alteration also took place which stripped the poor soldiery of a considerable portion of their pay.

I shall illustrate this by facts. Previous to that increase of the military establishment, the principal offices in the army had been rather posts of honour than emolument; rather places of trust and dignity than places that secured to the individual an increase of patronage; and thereby rendered him at once more inclined to be servile and cringing to the power above him, and more capable of reducing those below him, to a state of abject terror and dependence.

But when this increase of the establishment took place, the Colonels who used to advance money out of their own pockets, that they might occasion the soldiers to be better dressed and provided for, and to make a more comfortable and more respectable appearance in the eyes of their fellow citizens—the Colonels thought that this was a practice they might very well lay aside; and instead of putting themselves to expence, in order to increase the comforts of the common soldiers, they began very seriously to reflect by what means they could turn the pay of the common soldiers to their own interest and advantage: how they might bring money into their pockets, instead of sending it out of them. Accordingly we find that, from this time, a regular stoppage was made out of the pay of the soldiery, at the rate of 2d. per day, which amounted to 3l. os. 10d. per year, for the article of cloathing.

Now, Citizens, I have been informed by a person who has very considerable concerns in those trades which interfere with the cloathing of the soldiery, that out of this 3l. os. 10d. per year, which is stopped out of the soldier's pay, there is, in reality, never more expended than from 40s. to 45s. per year: so that the Colonel, out of the pay of every man, under

der pretence of cloathing him, gets, in reality, what may be called *fleeing money*, to the amount of 15s. per year; which, taking 700 soldiers to a regiment, amounts to 525l. a year, sheered from the backs of the poor soldier, in addition to that enormous pay which he receives as Colonel; and which ought, undoubtedly, to be considered only as a proper reward for the dignity and advantage which a man of *birth* and *condition* in life confers upon the army of this country, by exhibiting his fine person before it three or four times in a year, in a suit of gold laced cloaths of the finest scarlet.

But the speculation does not stop here. For mark the growth of corruption! Corruption is a towering weed. It is, in short, that grain of mustard seed, often talked of but never before understood, which, once dropped upon any soil becomes a towering tree, and the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, (priests, ministers, and pensioners—all animals of prey) take shelter under its foliage. Corruption having risen to this height, soon spreads to a more considerable degree. For if you look through the roll of the army, and examine the situations, and the additions of rank added to the name of every Colonel in the army, you will find very few Colonels but what have also other appointments in the army, of still higher rank and dignity: either as Generals or Major-Generals, or some other distinction of honour and emolument.

This, in reality, reduces the Colonel of the Regiment to a mere sinecure officer: a person receiving a certain pay, for no other service than that of bearing the title to which that pay is annexed; and giving himself the trouble to *send* to the proper place for receiving the money when it becomes due; for there is a sort of etiquette in the army, which ordains that no officer, who holds an appointment of superior rank, shall ever perform any duty in the inferior rank: and though a man is both General and Colonel, *at the pay-office*, yet his rank as General precludes him from doing any duty as Colonel in the field, or on the parade:—Ergo, the Colonel is a useless office in the army; because the supposed duties of that office are performed by other persons, bearing titles of less dignity; and receiving their pay according to that inferior station. Thus, in reality, the whole service that the Colonel renders to his country, for his pay, and for this 525l. a year, fleeced from the backs of the soldiers; is no other than stalking about with all the pageantry of military authority, and ornamenting an assembly or a levee with his cockade and sword.

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But, Citizens, I have not yet got to the end, even of that small portion of facts, relative to the unjust and cruel speculations committed upon our brave soldiers, which have come to my knowledge. One of the advantages resulting from a *Commons House of Parliament*, by whomsoever it may be bought, or by whomsoever it may be sold; whomsoever it may represent, or whomsoever it may despise because it does not represent them;—one advantage resulting from such a House of Commons is, that, now and then, in the warmth of those disputes that arise in a squabble for places and pensions, indiscreet individuals, who happen to be charged with more information than they can hold, suffer it to boil out in the froth of debate, and the people get, thereby, possession of a few facts, of which they would otherwise be kept in profound ignorance for ever.

You will remember, some time ago, a very pretty pretence that was made, of making an additional provision for our gallant soldiers. In the debate upon this subject it was admitted by Sir George Young (who at present does not take much share in the debates of the House of Commons you know; being better employed at the Mint) this Sir George Young was obliged to acknowledge, during the investigation of that subject, that there was sixpence a week stopped by the paymaster, out of the pay of every soldier, for necessaries; and he, in the course of his speech, observed, that *SOME HOW OR ANOTHER!*—for these were the words he made use of—*SOME HOW OR ANOTHER* it happened, that this sixpence a week, sometimes amounted to eighteen-pence or two shillings, stopped for necessaries to be provided for the soldiery.

Now it did so happen, that in the whole of that *immaculate House, whose virtues, whose independence, and whose enthusiastic attachment to the people*, we never can sufficiently admire and reverence!!!—It did so happen, that in the whole of that House there was not found one Member so metaphysical (though *metaphysical Members* we know there are in that House) as to enquire what was the meaning of those words *some how or another!* These words seemed so impossible to be understood, or the investigation of them seemed to be so dangerous, that they passed them over in silence: or, as the good old venerable Dames, who teach school in our little country villages, more technically express it, they *skipped it*. “Go on child—Go on” says the Dame. “I ca’nt go on” says the boy, “I ca’nt read this word Ma’am”—“Spell it child—  
Spell

Spell it."—"I can't spell it," says the boy—"Why then *skip* it, child: mayhap its Latin." So neither the great boys, nor yet the old women in St. Stephen's School, being able either to read or spell this *some how or another*, or to tell whether it were Latin, Greek, Hebrew, or Esquimaux, they even *skipped* it; and went on to the next verse; which was a vote of 23,000*l.* per year, of the public money, to cover the speculation.

Thus, Citizens, you see that, resulting from this system of a standing army, independent of its tendency to reduce the great body of the people to an ignorance of the use of arms, independent of the circumstance that it renders one part of the people liable to be called out to destroy and trample upon another, independent of the circumstance that, instead of the defence of the nation being vested in the hands of the nation, the defence of the nation becomes vested in the hands of the Minister, and thereby that which was meant for defence, is frequently made an instrument of destruction; independent of all this, there is the patronage, there is the corruption, there is the particular emolument resulting to those who batten upon the plunder of poor beings who toil and sweat, and bleed for their protection.

Poor, unprotected soldiery of Britain! and is it thus you are subjected to the dominion of a few beings, far, far less worthy than yourselves, did ye but know your worth? and who treat you as objects whom they are to scourge for their caprice or gratification; as objects whom they are to starve for their benefit and advantage; and, having reduced you to their dominion of slavery and terror, to make you the objects of terror to others, for the security of their own aggrandizement and corruptions.

But, Citizens, notwithstanding all these encroachments, there was one great advantage which this country, and the soldiery of this country, possessed till very lately, with respect to the military establishment. I remember, Sir *William Blackstone*, the doctrines in whose Commentaries were once considered as the highest pitch of aristocratic assumption, but which are so mild, and moderate, compared with the monstrous doctrines supported by the present administration, that the friends of liberty are now glad to fly for protection under the Tory wing of that Courtly Magistrate:—I remember, that this Judge *Blackstone* exults in his Commentaries, as one of the chief objects of constitutional security, in this country, that though we had a standing army, yet it was not an army of men sepa-  
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rate and distinct from the people. It was an army of men who lived among the people; who mixed with the people, who were quartered upon the people; who were, in all respects, upon terms of fellowship and communion with the people; and that it was totally impossible to keep them in ignorance of the general concerns, and interests of the nation, or the subjects that provoked investigation at the time; because they were not, *like the armies of foreign Despots*, shut up in barracks, and excluded, in consequence, from the conversation of their fellow citizens.

But if this was one of the grand-constitutional boasts of this country—if Judge *Blackstone*, in his Commentaries upon the Law of England, laid this down as the grand palladium of the security of British liberty, and as the only consolation for the admission of a standing army among us, what is *British* liberty at this period?—Look where you will—turn to what part of the nation you think fit—Enquire in this neighbourhood, or the other, east, west, north or south, what do you hear, but rumours of erecting barracks?—and levies and contributions, a large part of which must be appropriated to the enormous expence of building those Barracks, in which the soldiery are to be immured, and in which they are to lose their small degree of remaining liberty, by being deprived of the opportunity of employing themselves in their peaceful vocations. They are to be robbed even of that fragment of *loco motive* liberty, which the very brutes in the wilderness enjoy without restraint:—the right of moving from place to place; the right of turning here or there, even in the intervals of duty, and seeking their society among persons whose conversation is agreeable to them, or for whom they have formed an affection or attachment.

One of the smallest calamities that result from this system of Barracks, is the increased expence to the nation: for every individual must see that it is impossible to maintain an army in Barracks, with the same expence as an army may be maintained when at liberty. A large part of the accommodation of the soldier, while mixing with the bulk of the people, he derives from those exertions by which he assists the labours of his fellow citizens and promotes a reciprocation of kind offices. Of this he is entirely robbed; and this must be, some how or other, supplied. It is not then merely the expence of erecting those Bastilles or Dungeons, that are to confine the degraded and insulted soldiery; they are, also, to be maintained at an expence greater, within those dungeons, than that

at which they might be better maintained in greater liberty, mixing with their fellow citizens, and exchanging good offices with them.

But that expence, grievous and burdensome as it is, is nothing to the evils resulting from this system. I shall not call again to your view the tendency it has to separate the soldier from the citizen; but, as a counterpart of this operation, I must not notice its tendency to engender a ferocity of disposition: for though soldiers are men, and have dispositions no more inclined by nature to rancour than other men, yet, when they are shut up with men only whose trade (if I may call it such) is death, when they are thus prevented from mixing with the innocent and estimable part of the softer sex, and when all the other circumstances attendant upon such confinement are taken into consideration, we cannot but dread the production of a degree of ferocity which they would never otherwise know.

Thus it is that the regular and orderly Governments of this refined and civilized age, do all they can to change the nature of man into the nature, ferocity, and cruelty of the brute; to tread the light of intellect in the dust; to drive away from the breast of the soldier, that milk of human kindness which is the greatest ornament of valour, and to engender in its place the unsociable and ruffian ferocity which distinguishes the Austrian, the Hessian and Russian barbarians with which Europe has so long been scourged. Thus it is we level that glorious distinction which, till this time, has lifted the British soldiery so much above every other soldiery of the world, and made them pride themselves in humanity, as much as valour.

But there is another point of view in which this system tends, also, to operate against the kindness and humanity of the soldier's breast. The soldier becomes more oppressed; and it is the nature of man to grow cruel by oppression. Witness the excesses committed in France, excesses which could not have existed had not the people been so long trod under the hoofs of a *swinish nobility*. I say a *swinish* NOBILITY: for the nobility of France were in reality the true swine of Europe. They were the men who, wallowing perpetually in licentiousness, to borrow a metaphor from Shakspeare, "made their troughs in the embowelled bosoms" of their countrymen; and devoured, or destroyed, every thing which should have contributed to the happiness, the welfare, and glory of the universe.

No. XIX.

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I say



I say then, Citizens, by the cruelty and oppression of the system of confining the soldiery within Barracks, you do that which may tend not only to make them less worthy members of society, but to rob them of those comforts, and that happiness to which they are entitled, and to reduce them to a situation of greater misery than they would otherwise have been exposed to.

By these means, perhaps, it is wished to reduce the soldiery to a more abject dependence upon the government—to make them believe they have nothing to expect but from the Ministry; to teach them to suppose the people are not their friends; to make an artificial distinction between them; and, in a manner, to say to them—what do you partake from the people? Is not your pay from us?—Is not your food from us?—Are not the little indulgencies, that we think fit occasionally, now and then, to extend to you, all from us?—Is it not to us that you owe the ticket by which you are to buy your meat at a cheaper rate than the other citizens—Do not all these things come from us?—If the poor soldier is shut up from all intercourse with society, they think, perhaps, that he may be disposed to answer “yes.” But if he goes abroad among his fellow citizens, and receives kindness from them, and converses with them, he will be able to answer “No! It is from the people! all from the people: all! Nay not only do the people pay for our support, not only do the people pay for our cloathing, but we tell you also that the people pay for your’s. Our scanty meal, our scanty cloathing, is *not an alms received from you*. No: It is a part, and *but a small part*, of that just—that liberal and benevolent compensation which the people of this country are disposed to extend towards us; and which, in point of real pay and taxation, they do extend; but which, in passing through the sieves of Secretaries, Paymasters, Agents, and Contractors, becomes most miserably diminished before it comes to us. From them, also, you receive your gilded coaches, that engender your proud diseases both of mind and body;—from them you receive all your power, your emoluments, your distinctions, and your luxuries: and were it not for them, you would be less than the least of those whom you pretend to despise: less than the least of us whom you treat with this inhumanity, and threaten with that situation to which you shall never reduce us; because soldiers are free-men, soldiers are Britons, and the feelings of humanity shall

prevail all to violate not

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"not be torn from our bosoms by all the stripes you inflict, and the severities of your military tribunals."

Such then are the consequences of Barracks. They have a tendency to separate the soldiery from the people, who are in reality one and the same; they have a tendency to increase the burdens of the people; they have a tendency to rob the soldiery of the greater part of those little comforts which, from the present institutions of society, they can expect; they have also a tendency to keep up suspicion and distrust; and increase the mountebank system of alarm, and thus enable the jugglers of the day to play off their tricks with more eclat, and prevent that discovery, which, if ever it should take place, may bring them to account, and may compel them to refund the ill gotten wealth extracted from the groans and ruin of the country.

—But what are likely to be the consequences of all this? Has not a spirit of enquiry been long abroad? Have not the seeds of truth, think you, already fallen upon the soldier's minds? Are they the only set of men who have not begun to enquire?

Citizens, these artifices are vain. I know that soldiers have been threatened, and sometimes actually punished, with dungeons, and kept upon bread and water for reading a patriotic newspaper. I know that some soldiers of the Scotch battalion of Guards, now in the Tower, were threatened with confinement and with stripes, for subscribing together to take in "*the Gazetteer*." If they had subscribed to "*the Times*," or "*the True Briton*,"—(Oh! that ever the name of Briton should be so prostituted! that such a farrago of prostitution, falsehood, absurdity, and contemptible scurrility, should ever be stamped upon the forehead with the name of Briton! and that a man should be found, throughout the country, to give countenance to such a libel upon the national character!) If this had been the paper they had subscribed for, there would have been no threats of stripes and dungeons; for they have no objection to the soldiers, or any other persons, reading, provided they would read nothing but the prostituted trash published by Reeves and his associators, or the farrago issued from the frantic brain of Burke. They are poor deluded short-sighted creatures, however, who have so narrow an opinion of the human intellect.

Read, read my fellow citizens. It is better to read falsehood than nothing. The trash produced by the pimps and



spies of the present day, cannot but convince you of the falshood of arguments that appeal to such absurdity for support and countenance.

But have the soldiers received no sort of information? Have all the little pamphlets of the day escaped them? After all the diligence which Mr. Dundas, about 18 months ago, so pompously described of planting the Highways, and Wimbledon Common, with seditious pamphlets—what has the seed, so sown, no part of it found its way to the soldier's mess?—And have the soldiers no wrongs to redress?—What, when Sir *Henry Clinton*, in a pamphlet lately published, declares that a part of the spoil taken at *Charlestown*, has not, even to this very day, been divided among the brave soldiers who fought for the attainment of that conquest—such as it was!—What, after having bled and toiled, many of them expired and others lost their limbs, in the service of their country—as it was called;—after all this are they, or their widows and orphans, defrauded of their part of the emolument? Did your officers and great naval commanders divide their thousands and ten thousands fourteen years ago, and do great Generals step forward to avow, that the common soldiers remain defrauded to this day of their scanty pittance?—and will not these wrongs convince the soldiery, how much soever excluded from society, that the abused and persecuted patriots, who insist that reformation is required, are not the enemies of their country, or their country's soldiery—are not the persons, whose throats they ought to cut, even if wretches were found profligate enough to issue such command? Do what they will, so long as Ministers and their agents continue to practice such injustice, so long will the cause of truth be making rapid strides; and the ultimate harvest will be, that Ministers and their Agents, in a few years time, will no longer have the power to delude those whom they vainly suppose they can plunge into utter darkness and mental oblivion.

I could mention a great many other instances; but it matters not dwelling upon particular circumstances. The present situation of Europe opens a wider field of enquiry. We have found that men have rights. We have found that men have capacities to understand those rights, and spirit to assert them. We have found that intelligence can only be extended in proportion as men enjoy those rights; and we have found that virtue can only result from intelligence, and therefore we have only to choose between liberty and virtue, on the one hand,

hand, and ignorance, vice, and abject submission on the other. Having received these great truths, facts and minute particulars, when they can be brought forward, may assist us a little in the prosecution of enquiry; but the great principles are things to which we should be eternally resorting.

The events that have taken place in Europe might be considered as a warning voice to Ministers, to induce them to reflect, as Citizen O'Connor observes in that admirable speech which will illuminate unborn ages, and confer immortal glory upon the man who delivered it.—Speaking of the treatment of the soldiery, and of the attempts to separate the soldiers from the great body of the people, he says “Do not depend on the bayonet for the support of your measures. Believe me that in proportion as your measures require force to support them, in an exact proportion are they radically and mischievously bad. Believe me there is more strength in the affections and confidence of the people than if you were to convert every second house in the nation into barracks for the soldiery. And when the gentlemen, whom I have heard this night, tell you that to act in contempt of the public opinion is spirit and firmness, and that to act with a decent respect for that opinion is timidity and cowardice, they make the character of the Legislator to merge into the character of the Duellist. Is it not enough that you live in the age, and in the midst of the horrors of revolution to deter you from acting in contempt of the public opinion? Have you not had examples enough to convince you that men, in throwing off the russet frock for the uniform of the soldier, do not, at all times, throw away the ties of kindred and of blood? Have you not had examples enough to convince you, that even soldiers cannot at all times be brought to shed the blood of their parents, their kindred, and their friends?” and we might add that soldiers, also, cannot always be kept in ignorance of the incontrovertible maxim that *all mankind are Brethren*; and that tho’ Irish soldiers should be sent into England to cut the throats of Englishmen, or the English be sent into Ireland to cut the throats of Irishmen, that in reality the Englishman acting against the Irishman, is whetting a dagger that will reach the breast of his parent at home, and the Irishman acting against the English is also murdering his own relative at home. Yes, they will see that it is only striking with the left hand instead of the right; but that the blow is as certain  
in



in this *cross-handed* fray, as if brother pointed the bayonet at the breast of brother, and the father were sabreing his own son. He proceeds,—“And have you not had a great and memorable example to convince you, that the soldiers of an odious government may become the soldiers of the nation.” I would fain hope this warning voice should reach all the Cabinets of Europe; that it should teach Ministers to confess that, not the men whom they proscribe and would destroy on account of their attachment to liberty, are the enemies of the constitution, not these are the Jacobins, as they chuse to call them, but that the real Jacobins are those who having seen the steps and measures which produced the revolution in France, themselves being in power, and having the opportunity, dare to adopt the same measures, and to pursue the very steps, which rendered the Revolution in France necessary and inevitable. One would think they could not be blind to this conviction—that as similar causes will produce similar effects, if they will adopt French oppressions, French retaliations will take place, and that upon their heads must fall the mischiefs that result from their vicious measures.

But, Citizens, as I have objected to barracks and fortifications; as I have objected to a standing army; it may be asked what are the means I would advise, in the present situation of society, for the security of the country: for no man can pretend to be blind to this plain and obvious fact, that

#### THE COUNTRY IS IN DANGER !

It is in some danger I believe from without, from more quarters than is suspected: for the mad and frantic measures of the administration of the country have roused a lion, which they will not be able to soothe again to slumber. They have conjured up a danger the whole extent of which they cannot perceive. They have entered into a ridiculous alliance with the Empress of Russia, under the vain hope of thus averting the catastrophe likely to fall upon the country. But what have they done by this? They have paved the way for the aggrandizement of their most dangerous and ambitious rival. They have entered into a confederacy with a faithless woman, the scourge of Europe, and blotted over with the most hideous crimes. But, if ever this woman shall bring her fleets into the ocean, what is likely to be the conduct of Russia; taking her present system into consideration? Let us ask what is her interest? and, having asked that, the ghost of a murdered husband shall tell you what sort of conduct she will adopt, and what crimes she will stop at when her interest dictates.

tates. What is the interest then of this Russian tyrant?—Why, *her* interest is the destruction of the British navy. She has nothing to do, therefore, but to appear to swell the bulk and importance of your navy; to stimulate you into some attempt beyond the real force that you may carry with you; and then, desert you in the hour of battle, and stand neuter while the enemy destroys your fleets. Then, having been well subsidized, she puts her subsidy in her pocket, and pointing to the British nation with scorn, ejaculates, “Behold the salary you have paid me for insuring your destruction and my own aggrandizement.”

It is not then by alliances; it is not then by fortifications; it is not then by barracks; it is not then by a standing army, that I would have you seek for security. I would have you seek security, in the first place, by standing intrepidly, but peaceably forward, and demanding with unanimous voice the restoration of your rights: shewing to the government of the country, and to the Ministers who are at the helm of that government, that you have an enlightened conviction of the nature of your rights; that you have a British determination to enjoy those rights; making use, also, of this plain argument—There is but one way to make the people of any country unanimous; and that is by giving them a common, universal, unanimous interest in the protection and prosperity of the country. Every man who has any thing to defend will stand boldly forward to defend it. And that country where there is any man, or any body of men, who can be said to have nothing to defend, that country may call itself a limited monarchy, may call itself a free country, or what it will, but the plain and simple fact is, that *it is a country of slaves!* for the only distinction between freeman and slave is this—that a freeman has a stake in the country of which he is a member, —has rights, and the opportunity, at least, of procuring possessions, while the slave has no stake at all, no interest to bind him to the government under which he lives, or to stimulate him to stand boldly forward, and expose himself to defend that country, of which he is a member. Make every man free and every man will be brave: for freedom engenders courage. If this were not the fact, how does it happen that a neighbouring country, whose population was so incompetent to enable her to stand against this country while despotism prevailed, should now lay prostrate at her feet the thrones and tyrannies of Europe, while the feeble arms of Britain in vain endeavour

to



to prop their tottering cause, and has almost fallen herself beneath the weight of that enormous ruin in which those tyrannies are involved?

It is then by a general system of liberty, that gives every man an interest in the country, that you can alone create that unanimity by which the country can be defended. It is only by doing this that you can hope that every citizen, in the hour of danger, will become a soldier, from the conviction that every soldier, in the hour of peace, will become again a citizen. But this is a conviction, this a system upon which I do not expect the present Administration will act, because I know that the instant such a system is established, the gilded fabric of their ill gotten power must crumble into atoms; and that part of the constitution which relates to the internal organization of the cabinet, and to the system of borough-mongering—that part, which is in fact an excrescence which corruption has planted upon the constitution, will be wiped away. The genuine Constitution of Britain will then shine forth with renovated splendour; and liberty and equality, justly defined and properly enjoyed, will once more make Britain an envied Paradise in Europe.

THE LECTURES *will re-commence Wednesday, the 2d of September.*

## THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XX.

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THE FIRST LECTURE "*On ALLIES and ALLIANCES; with Strictures on the FAITH of REGULAR GOVERNMENTS.*" *Delivered*  
Wednesday, May 27th, 1795.

[Note.—This and the ensuing Tribune are properly to be considered as concluding that Course of Lectures on the Causes and Calamities of War, of which the first four were delivered at the beginning of the season; and for which see *Vol. I. No. 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.*]

CITIZENS,

THE subject for the present evening is, The modern system of allies and alliances; with strictures on the faith of regular governments. This subject is exceedingly extensive. There are various points of view in which it may be treated. And, perhaps, if we trace things to the foundation, in whatever point of view we consider it, we shall be inclined to doubt whether alliances, such as are generally formed between nation and nation, are more absurd in their principle or more dangerous in their practice. The enquiry, from the manner in which I find myself disposed to take it up, divides itself into two heads: *first*, the political influence of these compacts between Government and Government; and *second*, their operation in a military point of view.

On the present evening I shall enter into an investigation only of that part of the subject which relates to the operation of these compacts upon the political liberty, and civil rights of man. What relates to the operation of alliances in the field of battle I shall defer till another evening—When I shall, of course, be led more at large into the characters of the present confederated powers of Europe; and into some speculations on the probable catastrophe of the present war.



In the first place, Citizens, I shall examine the arguments upon which the system of alliance is justified, and shall consider how far these arguments may be opposed by others of more serious importance to mankind. And, perhaps, when we enter seriously into the investigation we shall be obliged to confess that alliances are, in general, little other than combinations of particular governments, to oppress and plunder not only the people of all other countries, but even of their own.

The real principles of justice, I believe, and also the real principles of policy, would teach us to observe a conduct exceedingly different from that which has been followed by the Courts of Europe, not only during the present time, but for centuries back. I believe we should find that Justice would dictate to us to do all the good in our power to all the nations of the world; that policy would point out to us that the best things we can do for ourselves is really to promote the happiness and welfare of all the existing nations in the universe; and that our best way to do that is to form no particular alliances, compacts, or treaties, with any nation, or any set or body of men whatever.

It is necessary, for the happiness of mankind, (and it must be admitted as soon as examined) that animosities of every description should be laid aside; that human beings should consider each other as friends and as brothers; and that they should seize all opportunities of advancing that fraternal felicity which nothing but such principles and such convictions can promote. But it is evident, if you form combinations of alliance at one time, which are to dictate to you at future periods, the events of which you cannot foresee, that you must be frequently led to a direct violation of this principle. Compacts, in their very nature, inevitably proceed upon the short-sighted principle of *self interest*—or more properly of sordid jealousy and exclusion. These combinations, therefore, set out, in the first instance, upon the narrow and unjustifiable project of promoting the interest of a few, in opposition to the interests of the aggregate of the world; and the strong probability is, nay almost the certainty, that the progress of events will shortly render the execution of these compacts even more unjust and impolitic than at the time of their first adoption. Courts, however, have paid very little regard, in their practice, to the grand rules, either of moral conduct or national policy. On the contrary, all the cabinets of Europe

rope have been perpetually endeavouring to foment animosities and aversions between the people of their respective nations; and to draw the Courts themselves into a closer union of compact and mutual understanding.

These combinations among the different rulers of different parts of the universe, have for a long time gone on without exciting any degree of jealousy or enquiry among the people. A sort of lethargic confidence seems to have taken possession of the minds of men, and induced them readily to believe the tales of artful jugglers and hypocrites, that those entrusted with the management of public affairs certainly must understand better, what is for the public good than the public themselves; and that therefore they were only to repeat by rote, as parrots, the lessons put into their mouths by their rulers, without considering what were the ideas affixed, or whether they conveyed any ideas at all.

But, Citizens, I believe this is not precisely the case at this time. A spirit of enquiry has gone very widely abroad: a *spirit* which I do not think all the exorcisms of priests, the persecutions of ministers, or even the machinations of that arch inquisitor Reeves himself, will ever be able to lay. The fact is that people begin to discover this truth, that **ALL THE PEOPLE OF ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH HAVE ONE COMMON INTEREST AND ONE COMMON CAUSE**, which it is their duty zealously to promote, the machinations against which they are called upon anxiously to watch, and vigilantly, nay, *if necessary*, **BRAVELY** to oppose.

This interest—this cause, is the *preservation of* **LIBERTY, PEACE, and UNIVERSAL JUSTICE!** This cause, which can flourish only by suppressing the malevolent passions, and cultivating a disposition to universal benevolence, if ever it triumphs, annihilates at once the systems of nationality and cabinet alliances, and unites the *people* of all climes and latitudes under the peaceful banner of fraternity.

If this statement is seriously and coolly considered; if we strip ourselves of the animosities of faction and the attachments of party; if we take away from this system the miscolouring and misrepresentations with which those who cannot controvert its principles, have endeavoured to calumniate its supporters, I believe it will bring immediate conviction to the heart of man. For who can doubt, for an instant, that peace is better than slaughter? who can doubt, for an instant, that all national aversion, and hatred to persons, on account



of their sects, their opinions, nations, climate, language, or colour, are hostile to those generous and noble feelings of philanthropy, without which peace cannot be preserved, and the general intercourse and happiness of mankind cannot be promoted?

Let us enquire then whether alliances (even abstractedly considered) have a tendency to promote this disposition so desirable for the happiness of the universe. Let us consider also—and perhaps it would be well to consider this in the first place—whether, even if alliances could be admitted in themselves to be good, alliances *upon the present principle* of Machiavelian policy, are of that description which would be desirable. Admitting, for the instant, that alliances ought to be tolerated, what *ought* to be their object and principle, and what *is* the nature of the alliances that are generally formed? Do they arise from the people of the contracting—or rather the *contracted* nations, mixing and confederating together, and arguing with each other upon their respective views and interests, and learning the real dispositions and qualities of each other's hearts, and thence entering into such compacts and treaties as grow out of their conviction of mutual utility? Or do they in reality grow out of those cabals and confederacies, which a certain set of honourable spies, called consuls and ambassadors, carry on, frequently to the disgrace of morality, and the destruction of every virtuous, candid, and liberal principle which ought to be cherished in the human heart?

If the seed is bad let us not expect that the fruit will be good. If you sow night-shade in your fields, not bread but poison will be your harvest! If you sow treachery, venality, intrigue, and selfishness in your national intercourses, do not expect to reap friendship, faith, and national advantage, for your harvest can only be disappointment, contention, and the sword.

The plain and simple fact is, I believe, that the people are always kept in the dark, as to the real objects of all alliances at present formed between the courts of Europe. They are anxiously prevented from knowing, not only what were the motives, but what are the objects; and are hardly ever acquainted with the real tenor of the compact. There are, it is true, certain general articles with which you are to be acquainted, and upon the faith of which you are to pay your money—4,600,000 pounds, perhaps, at a time! But if any over inquisitive individual should indulge a dangerous disposition.

fit to know more than Ministers think fit to reveal, he is silenced at once by some member of the political priesthood, who scruples not to avow with the true air of diplomatic mystery, that there *may be* secret articles behind the screen, but warns the profane enquirer not to approach with impious interrogatories the sanctum sanctorum of cabinet confederacy. So that while you believe you are paying a nation to fight your wars, and defend your interests abroad, you may, perhaps, be hiring foreign mercenaries to cut your throats at home.

But, Citizens, I am, for my own part, much inclined to believe that alliances, conducted upon whatever principle, will be found injurious to the happiness and welfare of nations. I have always seen, during that little intercourse which I have had with the world, that the quantum of advantage produced by the individual exertions of any given number of persons, each toiling and labouring separately, has been very superior to the quantum of benefit or advantage produced by the same number of persons bound together by compact and combination. And accordingly, it has been very justly observed, that when *Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, and Gay*, united together to compose a particular work, they all four, clubbing their wits, wrote a great deal worse than any one of them ever did when he trusted to his own individual genius and imagination. It is so in every thing to which the physical or mental powers of the individual are any way competent. Whatever can be done by *an individual* is always *better done single-handed*, than when the same thing is attempted by several persons combined together.

I not mean to say that there is no benefit and advantage in mutual exertions and labour. There are certain things which are beyond the strength, which are beyond the longevity of man, which it would nevertheless be very useful to society to have accomplished. And there are certain undertakings which, in a great measure, depend, and very properly depend upon numbers and combination chiefly for their success; and, therefore, it is necessary for persons to enter into combinations when any such work is to be undertaken. But I mean to contend, that when the business is not of such a nature that it requires a larger portion of physical strength, a larger portion of longevity, than can be commanded by an individual, nor is of that kind to which united suffrage is requisite to give it the stamp of justice and the capability of success—when neither of these is the case, the individual  
does



does better to trust to the powers, the energies of his own intellect and capacities, than to strengthen and fortify himself, as he supposes, but in reality to debilitate himself, by depending upon the united efforts of other persons.

The question then is—whether the interests and concerns of nations are of that description that they require a combination of several nations together, or whether they are of that description that the individual nation *can* execute them by depending upon itself alone? For it must be observed, that, in many respects, nations resemble individuals, and the arguments that will apply to the individual will frequently apply to the nation, considered as an aggregate individual also. I do not mean to say that this is universally the case. Whoever argues by simile is in danger of falling into sophistry. And therefore let me warn you, whenever similitudes are offered to you, from this or any other place, to examine what are the particular features and accompaniments of the things compared. For there are points always at which they *do*, and others at which they do not touch. But, with respect to the general principles I have laid down, I believe you will find, that the individual body and the social body do exactly agree. That is to say, that whatever can be done by the individual nation, will be better done by that individual nation than by any combination and alliance of various nations; and that combinations, and alliances of various nations, ought only to be encouraged when the undertaking is of that description that, in the nature of things, an individual nation could not accomplish it. As would be the sublime projects of Dr. Darwin (if indeed they can be regarded as practicable at all) for ameliorating the condition, and correcting the climates of the globe which we inhabit. But there is another point at which I suspect the comparison does not touch. For tho' there are certain undertakings for which it is advantageous for individuals to combine, there are strong reasons for supposing that there is none, certainly there are very few objects that it is for the welfare of a nation to pursue, but what it can pursue and accomplish by its own individual exertions.

In short, putting out of our calculations the benevolent visions of philosophers, and considering the characters and pursuits of nations, such as they hitherto have been, I am much inclined to suspect, as you never can produce the same intimate connection between nation and nation as between individual and individual, as you never can produce the same  
mutual

mutual intercourse of mind, and thorough comprehension of the views and objects of each, so we shall find, that all those undertakings which cannot be accomplished by an individual nation are of that description that it is a great deal better never to undertake at all. For nothing but disgrace, ruin and infamy generally have attended, or I believe ever can attend, undertakings of so extensive and complicated a nature as to make national confederacies necessary to their conduct.

But there is one circumstance in which this parallel, between individuals and communities, certainly very closely agrees; namely, the energy, the vigour, and resources of intellect, which, standing independent of all other supports, has a tendency to generate in the character. The man who trusts to friends, to promises, and to professions, to extricate himself from embarrassment, or to attain the advantages he looked for, generally meets with nothing but disappointment; and, at last, after trammelling himself with inefficient obligations, is left to the pursuit of his original object in a worse condition than he set out, with a mind stripped of half its vigour, an imagination clouded, a judgment embarrassed, and a spirit deprived of that keeness and ardour with which, if he had always been in the habit of depending upon his own individual exertions, he would have been able to have pressed forward to the attainment of his wishes.

Is it or is it not so with nations? Consult the facts of history. Consult, if you will, the analogies of reasoning.—I believe abstract reasoning would convince you, that the arguments are still more potent with respect to the nation than the individual. But, if you love an easier task, turn over the pages of history, and see whether facts do not bear me out in the assertion I have made. Tell me, ye historians—(I will endure interruption if any man can tell me such an instance) what great, what noble, what glorious achievement ever was accomplished by a number of nations in alliance and combination. But, if you want to know the glorious achievements of individual nations, even petty little states, so small that their numbers would hardly people a second-rate city in France!—if you want the glorious achievements they have accomplished, turn to the histories of the little states of Greece; consult the histories of Athens and Lacedemon, those names for ever glorious—for ever dear to the heart that pants for liberty! those small but magnificent Republics, which, like stars in the political and intellectual firmament, will



will shine for ever as examples to mankind, and light us in the path of excellence. Think of the great exploits of Leonidas, of Themistocles, of Epaminondas—think of the glorious struggles of Thermopoli, of Salamis, of Marathon—think of the astonishing achievements which throng in the historic page of Greece and of Rome! Consider, also, the unconquerable energy displayed by the Arabian tribes, under Mahomet, and the early leaders of that religion, which, by the sword of unassociated valour, was established over so large a portion of the earth; not by the numbers, not by the potency, wealth, or resources of the tribes who made those conquests; but by that unity, that individuality, if I may so express myself, which knit and combined the little bands of heroes and the enthusiasts together, and occasioned them to have but one head, one heart, one object and pursuit.

But, whenever alliances have been made, we have always found that the nations thus allied have become enfeebled. We have histories and records of alliances innumerable. If I were to go largely into them, I should forestall a part of that which is to be the subject of my second lecture. I shall, therefore, neither dwell upon the crusades of ancient nor of modern times, at present; but shall refer them to their proper station in the second branch of my enquiry. I think I have said enough, and every individual will be able to recollect enough, to prove my position, that nations, as well as individuals, are enfeebled by extraneous dependencies—by alliances, treaties, and combinations.

There is another part of the mischiefs, however, of those alliances which must not be passed over in silence. It is their inevitable tendency to spread the mischiefs and the ravages of hostility through a much wider circle than could otherwise be affected by the rival interests, the mistakes and passions of mankind.

Alliances have been fruitful sources of calamity. This part of the established system of *regular Governments*, alone, has done more to ruin and depopulate nations, than all the gloomy passions that ever inhabited the breasts of men; nay, than the ambition of Princes and Ministers themselves would ever have been able to accomplish without this powerful engine. The hostility which grows between nation and nation, but for this might be settled by the contest between the two parties. But the system of alliance diffuses the mischief from pole to pole; and if two neighbouring nations choose to contend

tend about the navigation of a river, the possession of an inaccessible rock, or a barren mountain, the consequence is, that the flames of war are to be kindled from nation to nation, the whole universe is to be disturbed, the peasant of every clime is to be torn from his useful occupation to the field of death, and the matrons of the most distant nations to behold "their infants quartered by the hand of war."

It has been pretended, however, that small countries, or countries of but little political force, would not be able to protect themselves, and would consequently be trampled upon by their more powerful neighbours, if it was not for this system of alliance. Let us enquire what sort of foundation there is for this observation: or rather, let us enquire what sort of effect has been produced, in this respect, by this boasted system of justice and generous protection. If security to the weak has resulted from these confederacies, of which Courts and Ministers are so fond, there is then some colour of vindication; altho' I contend, that the principles of justice and sound policy would produce this effect still better without any such alliances. Justice would dictate to me, that if I am a strong man and my neighbour is weak, I am not to suffer another strong man, merely because he is strong, to break into my neighbour's house and destroy him.

I do not mean to say, that you are not to lend assistance to those who are absolutely wronged. I only say, you are not to make alliances and combinations, by which you agree that, however a quarrel may begin, whoever may be right, whoever may be wrong, (for this is always the sense, though not the express wording of every treaty of alliance) you are to make yourselves a party in the quarrels and projects of your ally, by whomsoever insulted or whomsoever he may insult. It is the alliance, not the principle of justice of protecting the weak against the tyranny of the strong, that I censure: And though there was no treaty of alliance between the Court of *St. James's* and the Court of *Warsaw*, yet if one half of that wealth squandered in this country against the liberty of *France*, had been spent to protect the Poles from that destruction which a combination of despots has brought upon them, I should have gloried in the magnanimity of a nation which had stepped forward to save an oppressed and a virtuous people from the jaws of tyrannous destruction: I should have rejoiced the more in the conviction that they did it from the dictates of their honest and virtuous hearts, and not from the compulsive, or supposed compulsive circumstance



of there being a treaty of mutual assistance between the respective powers. But what stronger argument can we have of the impotency and absurdity of these treaties, than the very circumstance of the fate of *Poland*? The Court of *Prussia* enters into an alliance with the Court of *Warsaw*, by which they bind themselves to mutual protection and good friendship. Yet, by and by, true to the Machiavelian maxim, that "a Prince is never to observe his promises any longer than it is to his own interest," forth steps the virtuous and pious representative of the regular Government of *Prussia*, to make an alliance with the still more humane, pious and virtuous representative of the regular government of *Russia*, and the sapient, the just and magnificent representative of the regular government of *Germany*, and they make a fresh compact, and a fresh alliance—for the protection of *Poland*? no, for the division of *Poland*, with whom this self same King of *Prussia*, this juggling mountebank in gold and purple—this King of threads and patches, had formerly made a treaty of alliance and support. But it ends not here. You have only got to the fourth act of the farcical tragedy. In all probability the fifth is now in rehearsal; and by and by we may have a treaty between the Emperor of *Germany* and the Empress of *Russia*, against this self same King of *Prussia*, with whom hitherto they have been in alliance, that they may, for the better preservation of the balance of Europe, beat him out of the share of the plunder.

Yet such are the allies we subsidize! Such are the powers to purchase whose faithful assistance, we strip the poor labourer of every comfort and necessary of existence, make his marriage bed a curse, and turn the fruitful issue of his love into plagues and scorpions, harrowing his imagination, and piercing his ears with the cries of want.

To one of these precious allies, in the midst of all our national distresses, 4,600,000 pounds are to be lavished; how much we are to give to the other is yet, perhaps, a secret behind the curtain of the Cabinet; but which we shall one day or other be acquainted with to our cost. Such are the regular governments upon whose faith we can depend, notwithstanding the frequent examples we have had of their unqualified treachery. In the cobweb fabric of their promises we consent to weave the destiny of further years of tremendous hostility, and of thousands of industrious families; upon the frail trust of such a thread we hang our trembling hopes; and, with no better security, consent to prolong the miseries of

of Europe, and to perpetuate that famine, scarcity, and desolation, so large a portion of which we have already distributed not only among ourselves, but to all surrounding nations.

But what are the pretences for alliances? One of these pretences—and a very favorite one indeed, in this country, is the preservation of the balance of power. So you see, first of all, we describe power by a metaphor, calling it a balance and then realize the dream of our own fancy, and at the expence of the lives of thousands, and the happiness of millions, plunge all Europe into confusion, in order that we may break a piece of power away here, and throw it in there, to preserve the equipoise of these imaginary scales. O convenience of metaphorical logic! If it suited the purposes of these sophistical reasoners, they would find that any other sort of simile was equally descriptive.

The British constitution used to be described as a triple balance, and many fine declamations have been made by political jugglers upon the basis of this ridiculous metaphor; but projects were formed for which this triple balance would not answer, and Judge *Eyre*, finding that this metaphor, instead of supporting his new fashioned theory of High Treason, changed *hocus pocus*, the balance into a wheel: put the poor British Constitution to the rack, (—poor Constitution!—it had been mangled enough already!) and then, to show his knowledge of *physical*, as well as metaphorical science, he tells you, that any thing that presses upon the circumference must injure the centre: though we know very well that a centre is in its nature immovable, and that whatever violence is committed upon the circumference, can only alter the direction or velocity of the converging points, while the centre inevitably remains uninfluenced. However, a wheel or a balance, or a sword, or a halter, are any of them metaphors sufficiently capable of extensive application, to answer all the purposes of political reasoners. Having got the power in their hands to proceed at will to final demonstration, who shall dispute the intermediate gradations of their logic? or deny that a metaphor is as legitimate a basis of sound argument as a syllogism or a self evident fact?—The *rack* at such times is just as good an emblem of justice as a pair of *scales*; and it matters not whether you adopt the one or the other; while the sword is ready to dispatch the individual whom neither the balance can weigh down nor the rack subdue.



Having made the power of Europe a balance—a balance it should seem of a *hundred scales*! each government supposed itself Briarius (the giant with a hundred hands) that could uphold them all; and, accordingly, it has always been thought necessary, by one or other of them, to keep the world plunged in wars to support the metaphorical equipoise. But if we ever could be blind enough to suppose that the jugglers who talk of this balance of power were in earnest, we ought to be very much obliged to them for their late conduct, which certainly must have opened our eyes, and convinced us that they never had any meaning, nor ever meant to have any meaning, unless it was that the people were to be put in one scale, and the individuals who compose the government in another, merely to show how light the former are in the estimation of the latter; and how immediately they, with their emptied pockets, kick the beam, weighed down by the ponderous mass of revenue, places, and patronage, in the courtly scale.

The balance of Europe! Will any person believe, if in this balance there had been any real meaning, that it was not more destroyed by the partition of Poland, than the navigation of the Scheldt? Is it more dangerous to the safety of Europe, that Savoy should be added to the French Republic, than that so large a portion of Poland should be affixed to the immense empire of Russia?—whose ferocity and ambition, whose rapid strides of usurpation, and whose faithless conduct must have convinced mankind that the real object of her pursuit is the subjugation of Europe! the slavery of the civilized universe, over which her barbarians are to be established as military governors, to restore the reign of ignorance and ferocity!

Another pretence for alliances, (a more modern pretence) is the preservation of order and morality.

Citizens, in what do order and morality consist? In destroying towns and villages? In depopulating nations? In laying fields and vineyards waste, and then raking the ashes together, to spread them decently over the graves of a few great victims, whose power and grandeur could not preserve them from *the stroke of justice*, when the wickedness and indecency of their conduct had shaken, to their foundations, the venerable structures of prejudice and superstition that once protected them? If this is what is meant by the preservation of order and morality, then indeed are the present confederates against regenerated France, at least in their intentions, most  
orderly

orderly, most moral, and most pious!—then, indeed, have alliances and royal combinations most frequently, and especially in the late instance, advanced the cause of order, and of that moral distribution, upon which so intimately depends the felicity of the world. Then lö Kings, Courts, and Cabinets!—lö alliances and royal confederacies! for the promised millenium is itself at hand!

But if, by order, we mean the establishment of peace and justice; if, by morality, we mean that system of benevolent conduct, which promotes the general welfare and happiness of mankind, what order, I ask, what morality can be promoted by a band of depredators, under whatever titles or distinctions, uniting themselves together to break into a country, with whose concerns they had no right to interfere, to spread desolation through nations that did not choose to adopt their system of politics.—I know but one system of order and morality: and that must spring from the heart; from enlightened understandings, directed to the pursuit of principle; from a determination to promote the peace, the happiness and welfare of mankind, and, as the best means of advancing these, to resist the encroachments of tyranny and usurpation, under whatever forms or pretences their encroachments may be made.

Another of the pretences for alliances and combinations, in the present day, is the preservation of religion. And here, at least, it must be admitted that the advocates for these alliances in this country, have certainly shewn a great disposition to impartiality and justice. So that they may but be employed in protecting *religion*, they care not *what religion it is*. Popish, Protestant, Greek, or Mahometan, it is all the same. So that it be but some one of those systems long established in *regular governments* (and who shall deny the praise of *regularity* to the Governments of the Grand Signior or the Czarina?) it matters not which. We are now very busy in protecting, and restoring the holy Roman Catholic Religion, and we know, a little while ago, that *England* (I mean the ministry of *England*, for the people, you know, in these matters are non entities) were filled with just as anxious a desire for the dominion of *Mahomet*, as they are now for that of the *Pope*: just as ready to draw the sword to preserve the religion of the *Ottomans*, as now to preserve his Holiness in the chair of infallibility, and restore the great hats of the Cardinals to that dignity from which they have been hurled by the atheistical revolution in France.

But



But suppose we are serious for a minute upon this subject, and ask ourselves, whether we can possibly be guilty of a greater absurdity than, in one instant, to fall down on our knees, and worship a being, whom we say is *omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient*, and at the very same time, by drawing our swords to fight against *his enemies*, (admitting, for the instant, that such a being could either entertain or suffer enmity) to confess that we do not believe he is able to take his own part, or enforce his own will?

These are the *pretences* upon which alliances have been made. But those who are acquainted with the history of Courts (and indeed they have been exceedingly busy in publishing expositions of their own history of late) those at all acquainted with the history of Courts know that *pretence* is one thing, the *real object* another.

Now, Citizens as I have all possible respect for the Administration and Senate of this country, I shall not say one word about *their* motives: which I take it for granted, are the very best that they are capable of conceiving. But I believe it must be admitted, whatever is the case with the Cabinet and Court of *Britain*, that, with respect to the Cabinets of many countries, the real object of these alliances has been TO STRENGTHEN THE HANDS OF GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE PEOPLE! to support those individuals who have seized the Administration, or abused the Sovereignty of their respective nations; to fortify in their past and meditated usurpations; and to enable them to pour foreign mercenaries into their countries, and menace and overawe, and, if necessary, dragoon the people, who might be otherwise unwilling to submit to their propositions.

That this has been the case with some of the nations of *Europe*, I shall proceed to show. Let us remember what was the case with *Brabant*. *Brabant* imagined, as I suspect every nation will now and then imagine, for there is no accounting for the strange conceits that sometimes get into the heads of men—the Brabanters, I say, *imagined that they had RIGHTS!* that they had a claim to independence! that they were not a parcel of brute beasts, a swinish multitude, who were to be driven, and whipped, and slaughtered at the will of their Lords; but that they had a right to vindicate and assert the ancient laws and liberties of their country, if they were wise enough to improve those laws and liberties, for their own advantage, as their ancestors before them improved the elder institutions, and reformed the elder abuses that existed in their days.

days. You know the history of that struggle. Brabant was upon the brink of accomplishing its object; and the tyrant who refused to govern by the laws was about to lose his government altogether. Alliances, however, were formed with different Cabinets of *Europe* (and, O! shame to speak it, with that of *Britain* among the rest!) which convinced the Brabanters that they must relinquish the chimerical ideas of rights and privileges, and peaceably submit themselves to the wisdom, the virtue, the moderation, and justice of the *regular and established usurpation*. Brabant, however, you will recollect, though disappointed then, has since attained her object; perhaps not so well as she would before; because a nation always does best without the assistance of foreigners, however just and generous these foreigners incline to be.

*Holland*, also, thought it had a right to settle its own government. The *Batavians* remembered their ancient independence, so bravely purchased, and once so wisely established; and they did not very much like the idea of being governed by an individual, who was evidently the subject of another of the crowned heads of Europe. They therefore took it into their heads, that as they had a constitution which authorised them, whenever they chose, to dismiss or set up a Stadtholder just as they pleased: a Stadtholder being, in reality, no part of the ancient constitution of the Batavian States—They thought they had right to appeal to the ancient laws, and redress the oppressions, usurpations, and grievances under which they groaned; and they began seriously to think of setting about the business. But no, says the Stadtholder: You are combined together, and you are disposed to get rid of me; and you tell me you have a *legal and constitutional*, as well as a *natural* right so to do. I will not dispute the matter of right with you: it is not convenient to me, at present, to refer to histories and constitutions; but I will let you know that there are other Princes and Potentates in Europe who understand a logic of another sort; and with whom I am in alliance and combination; and with a *Prussian* army, and a *British* fleet, I will drive you like a rebellious herd before me, or tumble you into your own dykes, like so many frogs, till you croak for mercy, and hide your heads in Orange peel to get out again.—So much for Dutch and Austrian alliances.

The old despotism of France had its alliances also, and the French people being bit, in their turn, by this same mad dog, love of liberty—for its astonishing how this dreadful canine infection runs from man to man, and from nation to nation, so  
that,



that, dreadful to think! it may, perhaps, in time, disturb even the *Pope* in his vatican, dismiss the *Grand Signor* from his seraglio, and infect the beautiful nymphs and emasculated Eunuchs with metaphysical notions of the rights of man. France began to think of its rights, and to set about reforming the abuses of government. Aye, says the King—or rather the Queen, for he, “good easy man,” give him but his beef steak and bottle of burgundy, would not trouble you with speeches, if you did not, as you do with other automations, make the speech for him, and compel him to do whatever you desired. Aye, aye, says the Queen, that is all very well, and my good man shall appear to agree with it. But I have great relatives, and my German alliances shall back and support us, whenever I see good that the royal puppet should break his oaths and promises. They shall convince you, that you have nothing to depend upon; that oaths are air; that bonds and constitutions are paper; and that while we are amusing you with fair promises, *our* allies, but your open enemies, were furnishing us with the means of crushing you at pleasure. Thus, by infernal arts and machinations, the offspring of alliances and family compacts, was France interrupted in that career of virtue and philosophy, in which she set out. Yes—I repeat it—that *career of virtue and philosophy*!—for though the spectacled lunatic of St. Omer’s, at the very commencement of the Revolution, fulminated his anathemas, and with his diabolical howlings against the National Assembly stigmatised their holy labours; look at their maxims of virtue, humanity, justice, and then blush, ye combined Courts and Ministers of Europe; blush at those wicked hostilities, and still more wicked intrigues, by which you have driven them from this peaceful career of intellect, to use the destructive weapons of force and violence. France, also, was interrupted in her career, by foreign alliances, by combinations of foreign Courts, that refused to explain the nature of their compacts. But France had too much energy, too much intellect, too much enthusiasm to be disappointed even for a time; and though she chose an alternative which has been dismal, in many respects, in its consequences, and was plunged by an infernal faction into excesses, at which nature shudders, yet she has taught one great and important lesson to the world, that a nation bent upon enquiry and improvement, may sometimes mistake its way, may sometimes, by the arts and the malice with which she is surrounded, be plunged awhile into tumults and mischief, but will persevere not.

not only to the final accomplishment of her own virtuous objects, but to the downfall of those whose criminal artifices, or ambitious usurpations, would blast her harvest, and cloud the prospect of felicity and glory.

See then, if it is not digressing too far, what has been the consequence to those who formed those fatal alliances. What has the Emperor got? You will tell me, perhaps, 4,600,000*l.* of English money. But this getting will be to him no gain; not that I believe he will ever pay you one shilling of it again, or ever be able so to do. But what has he got in point of power and grandeur? Let the Brabanters answer you that question. What has the Stadtholder got? A snug retreat on the banks of the Thames; and a Dutch fair, represented in pantomime at *Frogmore*, may, perhaps, convince him of the gratitude of his *Master*, but will poorly atone for the forfeit revenues of seven wealthy Provinces, with all the regal splendours of the *Hague*. But behold the consequence of Machiavelian policy! You may destroy the poor deluded puppets, whose grandeur you would exalt over the rights of man; but human intellect, when backed by human energy, is invincible: and woe to those who are frantic enough to oppose its career.

Citizens, we may remember, that about eighteen months ago, we were also menaced with something like a friendly alliance of this sort in England. A fortunate disease visited some foreign troops in the neighbourhood of our coast, and they were humanely landed upon the Isle of Wight. This was only accident, to be sure; but then it served, you know, to feel the pulse a little. Thanks to the state of intellect in Britain, the pulse of the nation vibrated as it ought. The glorious energy of *Stanhope* roused the country to a sense of its danger; and the resolutions of the Patriotic Societies, I shall venture once more to assert, conspired with the speech of that noble Citizen, to chase the Hessian and Hanoverian barbarians from our coasts: and to the latest hour of my life I shall exult, that, at the peril of a disgraceful death, I contributed, by penning some of those resolutions, to save my country from that scene of desolation and mischief, which I am sure will take place, whenever foreign mercenaries shall be marched into its bosom, to coerce the people, and dragoon them into submission to any minister, *whatever may be the pretences* with which a measure so diabolical may be coloured over. Hail! hail! ye fetters, chains, and dungeons!—Hail! scaffolds, halters, and axes! you were meant, it is true, as *the brands* of infamy, and the punishments of guilt; but when tyranny and oppression reign,—when attempts are made to



subjugate a nation by bands of mercenary *cut-throats*, ye lose your terrors in the patriot's eye—ye are then the badges of virtue, and the passports of eternal glory.

Citizens, it has been rumoured, that such a design is again in contemplation. But I do not believe it. I think the minister of this country has learned a lesson which will prevent him from doing such things again. So long as Britons are ruled by Britons, I trust that they will use no weapons but reason and enquiry, however great may be their burdens. But I have not faith enough in human patience to suppose, that they will bear to be dragooned by foreign mercenaries; that they will yield their throats to Hessian or Hanoverian butchers, and suffer themselves to be trampled into submission by any foreign interference: nay, I confess that my pacific principles do not go so far as to wish that they should.

The manly spirit of this nation will, I hope, be displayed in peaceable and tranquil exertions: for I am sure of this, that no important reformation, no change or amelioration ought to take place, except when there is a unanimous and manly resolution to demand it: and when there is that manly and unanimous resolution, it will require no artillery to enforce it, no bayonets to accomplish it. But when a government is supported by foreign troops, it is then no longer a question of argument. Silence or resistance are the only alternatives.

Citizens, there is a good maxim among men of moral feelings, as to *common* plunderers. If they meet a highwayman, or footpad; if he demands their money, they will rather give it, than take away the life of a fellow-being, however depraved; but if he proceeds to violence, they must even, if they can, kill him in their own defence. In the same manner, I think the probability is that though the people suffer their money to be taken away by foreign mercenaries, they will not suffer themselves to be dragooned by the admission of them into this country; and if they would, all I can say is, that the modern inhabitants of this island are no more Britons, than the present race of slaves who inhabit what once was Greece, are Athenians and Lacedemonians. Be this as it will, with respect to our money, it must be admitted, we have parted with it pretty freely: for Britain having rather too large a quantity of these *golden globules* flowing through its veins, the political quacks have been very solicitous to apply the lancet; and not a high German Doctor of them all but has occasionally held the bason. How much the better we are for these applications, I do not pretend to determine; but our great State Physician, our political *Sanguis*, seems determined to persevere in the practice. But

But all this is done to support the reputation of *regular governments*. To regular governments, notwithstanding the repeated instances we have had of their perfidy, we are ready to lend our assistance, and our money. With republican innovators, we are not willing even to cease the monstrous contention of slaughter and desolation; though we cannot produce one single instance of breach of faith in any of those governments, at this time existing, that are worthy of the name of Republics.

Has *America* broken her faith with any of the nations with which she has had any alliance? On the contrary, peruse the transactions on the banks of *Miami*; and then read the treaties between this country and *America*: consult also the rights of nations, and then answer me, Whether the irregular—the fantastical republican government of *America*, or the regular government of *Great-Britain*, can more justly be taxed with violation of its faith. Has the republic of *France* in any one instance, notwithstanding all its wild changes, broke its faith, or violated its compacts? No: on the contrary, in the report of *Gregoire*, relative to the *Rights of Nations*, observe what magnanimity, what principles of justice!—so sublime, I am bound to say, as never before were propagated by the government or public assemblies of any nation in the world. Hear them, in the very moment of triumph and victory, when all the nations of the earth were in a manner prostrate before them—hear them consecrating the equal rights of nations, and declaring, that “sovereignty is the right of every nation;” that “it depends not upon its power, upon its riches or population;” that “a dwarf is a man as much as a giant,” and has the same rights; and that “sovereignty is as much the right of the little province of *Sant Marine* as of the gigantic republic of *France*.”

Turn also, if you please, to the republican government of *Switzerland*. Has *Switzerland*—I ask the question with confidence—has *Switzerland* been less distinguished for its faith than the other governments of *Europe*? Quite the contrary: No nation has preserved a more unblemished character than that republic, in which, to a considerable degree, at least among many of the Cantons, the principles of liberty and equality are established: that republic in which (as the late King of Prussia declared with a sort of involuntary applause) “every individual is at once a peasant, a citizen, and a soldier.”

Away then with the absurd pretences, that you can have no faith in republics; and that you are to seek for it only in the regular governments of aristocracy and monarchy.

But



But they ask you, What signifies making peace with *France*, in her present state? What security can you have for a permanent peace?

What do these *regular governments* mean by a permanent peace? Would not one suppose, from this language, that, before the republican phrenzy broke out in *France*, Europe was always in a state of harmony and friendship? That these *regular governments*, with their compacts and alliances, might quarrel once or twice, perhaps, in four or five hundred years; but that their usual practice was to observe their treaties, and keep the peace inviolate, from century to century?—But what has been the fact? Consult the records only of our own country for the last hundred years, and you will find that, of that period, more than half has been devoted to war and desolation; that we have been five times at war with *France*, and six times at war with *Spain*, as I have shewn in a former lecture; that some of these wars have lasted eight or ten years together; and that it has been a long tranquillity indeed, that has suffered you to be six or seven years at peace. War after war, scene after scene of contention, has ensued. No pretence has been too frivolous, no object too contemptible, to be the ground of hostility.—The plain truth is, that these *Regular Governments* (that is to say, the Ministers who act under them) have an interest in keeping the world perpetually in war: that it is the people who bear the burden, but the governors who are enriched by the plunder. In short, the *regular governments of Europe* have hitherto shewn themselves to be consistent in but one principle—a principle which is indeed laid down by *Machiavel* as the fundamental axiom without which no *regular government* can possibly exist; namely, that they should neither keep peace, faith, nor compact, any longer than it is to the advantage of those by whom that compact is made. And hence it is that one universal system of slaughter and devastation has been incessantly pursued; nor is it easy to foresee when we shall get to the end of this dismal chapter.

Such, then, are the principles of faith and pacification among these regular governments. I leave it to your serious consideration, whether this is a picture to encourage you to persevere in war, till destruction and misery overwhelm you in one common mass, rather than trust to the yet untried faith of the *French republic*, however various it may be in its occasional formation, or whatever may be the internal factions which at present distract it; and which are not to be wondered at, when we consider the monstrous abyss of guilt, oppression, and contaminating corruption, from which they have been struggling to get free.

## THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XXI.

THE SECOND LECTURE "On ALLIES and ALLIANCES; containing *Strictures on the consequences of employing AUXILIARY TROOPS; and on the CHARACTER and VIEWS of our ALLIES; with a prospect of the PROBABLE CATASTROPHE of the PRESENT WAR.*" *Delivered Friday, June 5th, 1795.*

### CITIZENS,

YOU will remember, that when I formerly treated of the subject of allies and alliances, I entered into an investigation of the principles of the system. I endeavoured to shew you how far it was consistent either with good policy, or justice, to form alliances between one State and another, or rather between the Courts and Governments of respective States. I endeavoured to shew you that it was not, in reality, a union of the sentiments, passions, and interests of the different countries, that those who formed the alliances wished to promote; but that, on the contrary, every opportunity was seized to aggravate hostile dispositions, and to foment those prejudices which stimulate nation against nation, and urge the deluded multitude to deeds of murder and desolation. I therefore proceeded to conclude, that these compacts were rather to be regarded as alliances between Courts and Governments, for private interests and concealed purposes of their own, than contracts of different nations, nominally allied, but in reality no farther interested in the bargain than as they must bear all the burden, hazard, and expence which result from such alliances. I showed you that the subject naturally divided itself into two branches: First, the effect of these alliances, as they relate to the particular concerns of nations, and may influence the internal happiness and liberties of the people; and secondly, as they were likely to retard or assist the progress of those military projects which are generally



rally the avowed objects for which they are contracted. It was only into the first branch of this subject that I entered to any considerable length, that evening; and I concluded with reflecting on the subsidiary treaty, at this time about to be concluded between *His Britannic Majesty* and the *Emperor of Germany*. There is a part, however, of that treaty for the Imperial Loan which I have not yet touched upon, and which seems well worthy of consideration: I mean the terms upon which the loan is granted, and the delusive prospects held out to the people, relative to the pretended profit to result, whenever (*if ever*) the money so borrowed shall be repaid. It has been insinuated, that the terms of the loan are such that the people of this country are to be gainers two and a half per cent. The Emperor is to pay seven and a half per cent; while the whole interest payable by our Government, taking all the circumstances into consideration, amounts to no more than five; it being well known that the general system is to borrow at three per cent. and that the difference between the price of stock and hard cash makes it but about two per cent. more.

Whether this is the case or not you will presently see. And, in the first place, you will please to observe, that this avowed and evident interest, namely three per cent. paid upon the money borrowed, and also upon the fictitious stock that makes up the deficiency of the nominal fund, is only a part of what the nation in reality pays. For there are bonuses, commission money to the bank and to the brokers, and a variety of charges, of the amount of which those only who are in the habit of adding small items and incidental expences together, can form any idea.

But, Citizens, let us consider the real amount and nature of this loan a little closely, before we suffer ourselves to be deluded with these ministerial fables of profits and advantages. Remember that 4,600,000 pounds, hard sterling cash, are to be sent to the Emperor. That, therefore, in addition to all the expences of the negotiation, 4,600,000 pounds is to be borrowed upon the funding system. The consequence will be, when it comes to be reckoned, that so many millions of hard cash, *bona fide* borrowed, amounts in stock to twice the sum specified: that is to say, the loss upon borrowing is so great, that the difference between the *nominal fund* and the sum of money borrowed, all things considered, is nearly two to one; and, of course, to lend the  
Emperor

Emperor 4,600,000 pounds, we contract a debt of about 8,000,000. But you will recollect, that to buy is one thing and to sell is another. If it is so in the common concerns of life, it is transcendantly so with the stocks and funds in this respect. To those gentry who have thought fit to make a common gambling house of the change or market of those funds, I shall take no notice of the absolute loss which results from the circumstances of buying and selling, and the rise of stocks, and consequent loss to the nation, which would take place immediately, even if this money were now to come into the market again, by means of the fulfilment of the Emperor's pecuniary engagements.

There is another more important circumstance to be taken into consideration. If ever this money is paid at all, it must be in times of peace. And if it be true that the Minister has not already entirely ruined the country, when peace returns, prosperity will in some degree return, also, and the funds will necessarily mount to a considerable degree. Now the same quantity of money only, that he borrowed in time of war, is to be paid by the Emperor in times of peace: that is to say, when the funds are high (suppose at par) he is only to repay the 4,600,000 pounds, which he now receives when the funds are exceedingly low.

I shall not enter into any minute calculations upon this subject, it will lead me too far: and minute arithmetical calculations, with me, require more labour than I have time to give them. I shall just state, however, that Mr. *Fry*, the author of a book entitled "The Guardian of Public Credit," and who is, at this time, about to publish a very useful and important work on the subject of the funded debt, has calculated the proportion of the inevitable loss; and finds that, upon the supposition that the loan was to amount to six millions, the sum originally proposed, the inevitable loss would be to this nation, 2,657,000 pounds, upon this famous and most advantageous contract, even supposing that the Emperor, for novelty sake, should keep his word concerning the payment of the debt thus contracted. You will see then, that independent of the common losses and expences of the negotiation; independent of the circumstance of making a worse bargain for the English loan, in consequence of having a loan to make for the Emperor; independent of all these circumstances, you will see that the strong probability would have been, supposing the whole six millions to have been bor-



rowed, that the nation would have lost, by this bargain, 8,657,000 pounds; but as *only* 4,600,000 were accepted by our Imperial ally, you will find, upon calculation, that the probable loss is *only* 6,637,000 pounds, and the positive loss, independent of the circumstances previously mentioned, is no more than 2,037,000 pounds. A trifling sum for the important service of keeping a few *Austrians, Croats, Bohemians, and Hungarians*, a little longer in the field, to keep alive the languid flame of war, and avert for another campaign, or so, the dreadful calamity of turning the Minister out of place, to pave the way for an honourable and permanent peace with the brave insulted Republic of France.

But let us take into consideration the facts which have lately transpired, relative to the dispositions of the different states of *Europe*. Let us call to our consideration the conduct of the King of *Prussia*. Let us recollect how he has been receiving the money of *Britain* with one hand, and making peace with the *enemies of Britain*—the *enemies of the British Ministers*, I mean, with the other.

Citizens, you will remember, also, that at the time when the Emperor—for the Emperor of Germany and the King of *Prussia* seem as if they intended to prove to the world, that they were of the same family—and, indeed, as Kings and Emperors are all of a *race divine*, it may, perhaps, be admitted that there is some degree of relationship among them all! You will remember, that while he was ratifying the treaty which was to secure him the payment of this sum of money, he, also, declared to the Members of the Germanic Body, that he was ready to make peace with the French Republic: by which declaration he in fact did that which the Minister of this country will finally be obliged to do—acknowledged the French Republic as one of the orderly and regular Governments of *Europe*.

But you are told by Mr. *Pitt*, that you are not to suppose the Emperor sincere, in his declarations to his own subjects. There may be something in this: for I conclude that, if the Emperor had been a dealer in sincerity, he would not have entered into any combinations or agreements with Mr. *Pitt*; nor would Mr. *Pitt* have ever thought of going to his shop. You are told that this declaration of the Emperor was a piece of state finesse, one of those artifices which are very consistent with regular Governments, but which would fix an indelible stain upon the morals of a Republic. But, as to the ultimate

mate consequences, it is little to us, whether the Emperor is *finessing* with the Empire, or *finessing* with us—whether he is sincere in his professions of sending a large army into the field, or whether he is sincere in his profession of wishing to make peace with the *French Republic*; or whether, in reality, considering the situation in which he is placed, he does not know which he is sincere in, or whether he is sincere in either; but finding himself a little embarrassed, applies, in matters of state, the maxim which *Ovid*, in his “*Art of Love*,” enforces to those who are impressed with the tender passion—

“ Speak boldly on and trust the following word;

“ It will be witty of its own accord.”

But let us proceed to the second part of our subject—Namely, the effects, in a military point of view, of those alliances by which a variety of states (all having different objects, in reality, at heart, though *professing* the same designs) have endeavoured to press and bear down a particular country, or to accomplish any great and extensive project whatever.—What has been the degree of energy and conduct, displayed by those confederated powers, which, in different ages of the world, have combined their arms to subdue others to slavery, or subject them to persecution or extermination on account of their opinions, or for whatever cause, from the holy crusades undertaken to gratify the Popes of early times, to the present crusade of Kings, in which the Pope of Rome has been piously guarded, by the *protestant bayonets* of the English soldiery? Whoever has read must remember, that envy, jealousy, suspicion, misunderstanding, contention, and a consequent disposition to thwart each others views and objects, however they might profess to agree, have universally distinguished those confederacies, disgraced their arms, and disappointed their views. Each potentate, envious of the reputation, and apprehensive of the power of his colleague, coldly assists, or secretly thwarts his undertakings, and when this mutual jealousy has produced defeat and shame, each exclaims against the rest, to shift the dishonour from his own shoulders, and the consequence has generally been, that discord and distrust have produced lassitude, disappointment, delay, and, ultimately, retreat and ruin.

But it may be said, that the army to which we are to look for the successes of the next campaign, is not to be considered as

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an allied army of this mixed and complicated nature; for as it was observed by one of the French Generals who retook *Toulon*, that the only troops the Pope sent were cows and calves, so it appears, that in the next campaign, the only troops *Britain* is to send are her gold, her stores, and her provisions—if she knows where to find them.

But still we find, though we are no longer able to conduct the war, though our depopulated country, drained of its youth and manhood to the dregs, is no longer able to furnish foldiers for this desperate strife, still its sanguinary and insatiate agitators cannot consent to give repose to Europe—still we are determined to continue our crusade by the help of auxiliary forces.

But have we duly weighed the general consequence of a nation attempting foreign conquests by the arms of mercenaries? Have we well enquired what has been the general result of efforts of that kind? and what has been the general conduct of auxiliaries, when such projects have been pursued?

Citizens, there is a work which, when I consider the moral complexion of Mr. *Pitt's* politics, I suppose he has studied night and morning, even from his youth upward. I mean a work called “the Prince,” written by the famous Secretary of *Florence*, *Machiavel*: a man of considerable parts; tho’, taking him to be sincere in his political maxims, of no small depravity of heart. The *ethics*, I say, of this author, our Minister has studied with the most elaborate care, and has been anxious to try his powers of carrying the precepts into practice. But when I consider his conduct with reference to the degree of *wisdom* which it has displayed, and consider how many excellent things there are, in this respect, which he might have learned from this same *Machiavel*, I then become persuaded, that the morality which I was before inclined to attribute to the precepts of this master, must be, in reality, purely and entirely his own, springing from the congenial fountain of his own heart, or *inspired*, perhaps, by the footy Deity he appears to worship. For it is difficult to believe, that even the present Chancellor of the Exchequer could read a book with the express determination to separate from it and adopt every thing that was morally depraved, and pass over, or reject all that was prudent, politic, and wise. Let me, however, ring in his ears the warning voice of *Machiavel*, who, upon this subject, has many observations well worthy the attention of the statesman, and who, at once, by argument and

and historical facts, might convince him that he is pursuing those measures which will involve himself and his country in ruin and destruction.

Hear then this Machiavel upon the subject of auxiliary troops. After having told you that the principal foundations of all states were good laws and good arms, and having proceeded to shew the different kinds of arms that Princes may employ, he enters into an elaborate investigation of the nature and use of mixed and auxiliary forces, and, grounded in the facts of history, and assisted by an acute mind, he is led to this conclusion, that no arms are efficacious but those of the individual country, by which they are employed.

"Those arms," says he, "that are mercenary and auxiliary, are unprofitable and dangerous; and the Prince who rests upon them will never be secure or safe: for they are disunited, ambitious, undisciplined, treacherous; insolent to their friends, abject to their enemies, without fear of God or faith to Man; and the ruin of such a Prince is no longer deferred than till he is attacked." He proceeds, afterwards, to show you that the reason is—because "it is not affection for him that keeps such armies in the field: they having no attachment but to their pay; and this is not a motive strong enough to make them willing to die for him."

Yes, Citizens,—it is true: we find that gold will purchase men to take away the lives of others. Gold will hire men to stab—to shoot—to poison—or swear!—for that is the modern way of assassination. You may hire a man to be a spy and a perjured informer. If he is a little nice, or so, in his conscience, and does not chuse absolutely to make the bargain with you in open and direct terms, he may be given to understand, that, perhaps, the obnoxious person owes him 2 or 300 pounds, and that, if he hangs him, good care shall be taken that it shall not be lost. But though people will sell the lives of others, for the sake of *recovering a just debt*, or the like; nay, tho' some would even make a bargain of blood in a direct and public manner, few men will consent, for a little gold, to be shot themselves; or to get themselves hanged: that is, *if they know what they are about*. But if a man is employed as a spy, who is not clever enough to hang any body else, you know, why then he may chance to get hanged himself: an appetite for blood, being like all other appetites; and, when a man is keen set, he does not like

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to be entirely disappointed, and will rather set down to a coarser meal than he intended than go away with an empty stomach.

But, to resume the observations of *Machiavel*. He tells you, a few pages afterwards, "indeed it appears by experience, that Princes and Republics, with their own forces, alone, execute great enterprizes; and that mercenaries are always prejudicial."

He then proceeds to tell you the effect that this practice of employing mercenaries has on the character of a nation: marking, particularly, the inevitable decay of vigour and spirit among those people who seek to be defended by foreign arms. "Besides, a martial common-wealth, that rests upon its own valour, is not so easily enthralled by any of its citizens as one that depends upon foreign troops. *Rome* and *Sparta* maintained their freedom, for many ages, by their own forces and arms. The *Swiss* are more martial than their neighbours, and consequently more free."

Citizens, we might find a great variety of instances to support and illustrate this principle: and even the royal commentator of *Machiavel*, I mean the late King of *Prussia*, has furnished us with some. He tells us, "Experience has shewn, that the national troops of a state are always the most serviceable; as appears from several examples, particularly from the valour of *Leonidas* at *Thermopylae*, and from the amazing progress of the arms of the *Romans* and *Arabians*."

But what was the situation of *Rome* when she had recourse to auxiliaries, and mercenary forces? While she had wise and virtuous Ministers, more zealous to preserve than praise her Constitution; not usurping dominion for themselves, but guarding the sacred Rights of Man from usurping destroyers; she then defended herself by the force of her own arms and her own valour; but when the Romans were reduced to a state of degeneracy and slavery, when their great men became their tyrants, and their Ministers their oppressors; then abject *Rome*, whose ambition survived her energy, was reduced to hire foreign arms, and to fight her battles with hired swords. But, did victory continue to attend them? Were the citizens of *Rome*, when guarded by the savages of the *Danube* and the *Rhine*—the *Croats* and *Hessians* of the ancient world,—were they then delighted, as of old, with songs in praise of their illustrious Generals, with triumphal processions

sions and wreathes of victory? No, they found that foreign exploits were nothing more than the forerunners of domestic misery and ruin. And, as *Machiavel* well observes, "If we consider the decline of the Roman Empire, we shall find it first proceeded from employing the *Goths*, as mercenaries; by which means the forces of the Empire were enervated, and all their valour transferred, as it were, to those Gothic troops."

So strong was the impression made upon the mind of *Machiavel*, by inferences which he drew from facts of history upon this head, that we find him laying it down, in absolute terms, that it is better for a country to endure any distress and struggle, with a brave despair, than to permit itself to be defended by foreign troops; or to employ the arms obtained by alliances with strangers. "Let every Prince, therefore," says he, "*who would reduce himself to an incapacity of conquering*, employ auxiliary arms: for they are more dangerous than mercenaries." And a little further he says, "Wise Princes, therefore, have always rejected this sort of forces; and depended upon their own: chusing rather to be defeated with these than to conquer with the others: and looking upon that as no victory which is obtained by borrowed arms."

And very good reason there is to think, that nothing deserves the name of victory which is obtained by foreign arms; because the arms that obtained that victory for them, may, and in all probability will withhold the fruits of that victory. And if the nation, for whom it was made, should have the insolence to complain, perhaps, the very troops they so weakly employed, flushed with the insolence of triumph, and urged by that contempt which it is impossible for mercenaries and auxiliaries not to feel, for those who are obliged to hire them, may turn their sabres against them. A victory thus obtained may, in fact, be considered only as a prelude to the destruction and overthrow of the apparently successful country: In short, the project that cannot be effected by the proper force of the particular country that undertakes it, had better never be attempted at all: for the same sort of reason, that nothing but bankruptcy and ruin awaits the individual, who embarks in any business in which he is not competent to conduct himself.

But there is one instance more, which *Machiavel* gives, in illustration of this maxim, which appears to me so exceedingly apposite to this country, and holds up so very



forcible and important a lesson, that I shall not neglect the opportunity, before I quit this subject, of reading it to you. "If we consider the progress of the *Venetians*," says he, "it will appear that they acted with great security, success, and reputation, whilst they made war with their own forces," that is whilst they *fought only by sea*; the *Venetians* being a naval people; a people of commerce, and whose strength lay in their wooden walls; and not in troops employed in foreign conquests and crusades. Nor were the *Venetians*, while they were wise and flourishing, ever disposed to interfere with foreign states, or like our mad and ridiculous Quixottes, to think of such attempts as filling foreign nations with ready made constitutions, before which they had been able to take the measure.

"The *Venetians* were successful whilst they fought only by sea; but, as soon as they made a land war,"—What then? Were they merely defeated? No, Citizens; that would have been little; for, in many instances, defeat is better than conquest. And how calamitous soever, to persons in power, it may appear, and may eventually be, yet I am disposed to think, such is the case with us, in the present situation of this country; and that, calamitous as the times now are, they would be still more calamitous, if it were possible that we should succeed in the present mad crusade. But defeat was not all that the *Venetians* experienced. "As soon as they made a land war, they degenerated from their former valour, and adopted the manners and customs of Italy." What were those manners and customs of Italy, which were such certain signs, and concomitants of Venetian degeneracy? Why they consisted in *treachery*, in *perjury*, in *spying*, and *assassination*: (the last of these has not yet got footing in England!) An infernal system of inquisition is also to be considered as a part of the manners and customs of that Italian profligacy which the *Venetians*, by their bad policy, were led to adopt.

We know very well what sort of morals must arise from such a system; the page of history has not left us the dark in this particular; and we know what the state of society must become wherever these detestable Italian fashions prevail: Where spies are planted in every house, when men are bribed to become informers, and when, of course, individuals are destroyed by falsehood, and perjury.

The *Venetians* then, in this state of degeneracy, employed foreign troops to fight their battles; with the gold wrung  
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from the industrious people of the country, they purchased foreign mercenaries, till they lost, with rapid disgrace, all that they had been acquiring with great labour and difficulty. We have been told much of this country being made a department of France; and of its being an appendage to the Republic, one and indivisible. But you have not been warned of the still worse subjugation and slavery, proceeding from the vicious morals and the impolitic character which ministerial practices are introducing into this degenerate country. But be assured, when the character of Britain is lost—when the hearts of Englishmen are no longer to be stimulated by those warm, those generous and *republican* feelings of liberty, of which, of old, we had not used to be ashamed—and when, instead of these, we adopt the base assassin-like arts of Italian degeneracy, be assured that the independence of this country can no longer be preserved, and that something, even worse than becoming a department of the French Republic, must inevitably await us. Be warned then by the signs and prototypes of history, and let not, among the rest, the fate of *Venice* be forgotten.

We are told, that the catastrophe produced in the Venetian territory, by admitting this system of mercenary troops, was, that “in *one battle*, the Venetians were stripped of all “they had been acquiring, with incredible labour and difficulty, for *eight hundred years*: nor is this surprising, for “the conquests that are made by mercenary troops are slow, “tedious and weak, but their losses are rapid and amazing.” Such are the prospects, even according to this Politician, whom courtiers are most in the habit of consulting, (at least if we judge from the moral complexion of their politics;) such are the prospects that arise from employing foreign mercenary troops; and attempting to subdue other countries by the assistance of auxiliary arms.

I shall proceed in the next place to consider, as briefly as possible, what are the characters, the probable views and objects, of our allies; and what may probably be the consequences to this country, resulting from the assistance afforded towards the accomplishment of some of these views, by the present alliances.

Some of the august personages, upon whom it was once my intention to have animadverted with some severity, have made it unnecessary for me to give myself any trouble about them on the present occasion.



Respecting the Emperor, poor man! whatever character he may have had, it seems necessary that he should now look sharply about him, or else he will shortly have no character at all, at least among the estates of the Germanic empire. If we consider the terms of the second treaty concluded between the King of *Prussia* and the *French Republic*, and the effects that treaty may probably produce in Germany, we must presently see, that whatever views and objects he may have had, he must be disposed to think that the only view he can now profitably have, is, how he may disappoint the objects of the King of *Prussia*; which, should they succeed as well as they have begun, may possibly transfer the ascendancy in the Germanic Confederacy to the House of *Brandenburgh*, and annihilate the political importance of the House of *Austria*. You are to remember, that one part of the treaty is, that the King of *Prussia* and the French Republic have joined together to guarantee the neutrality of such of the principalities of Germany as refuse to provide their contingents for carrying on the war. It is believed that the Prince of *Hesse Cassel*, and the Prince of *Saxe Teschen*, in consequence of this, have already declared their determination to avail themselves of this circumstance. Be this, however, as it will, it is evident that, if the Circles of the Empire should so far second the views of the King of *Prussia*, as to be before-hand with the Emperor in making peace, and thereby take advantage of the proffered protection, the Imperial dignity becomes from thenceforward a mere shadow—the constitution of the Germanic Body is shaken to its centre. And yet Mr. *Pitt* supposes it impossible that the Emperor should be sincere in his avowed readiness to treat with the French Republic.—Such are the intrigues going on among the Princes of Germany! And so much for the faith of our regular governments, the stability of allies, and the dependence on alliances.

I conclude then that there must be a soft part in the head of the Emperor of *Germany*, if he does not turn around, and give a sharp look-out at his neighbours, lest, while he is attempting to make the Sans Culottes wear royal breeches again, the King of *Prussia* should snatch his Imperial diadem from off his head, and put a red night-cap in its place.

Citizens, I have talked about delineating the character of this Emperor, but I feel myself incompetent to the task; and for this very reason—because it is evident that he has no character to delineate; that he is a man of times and contingencies

cies—whose views and maxims have descended to him, like his crown, and whose grandeur and importance are derived from the taylor who made his imperial robes. He is in short a mere thing of mechanism and detail—who upholds this and aims at that, merely because the House of Austria have so aimed and held for the greater part of the last century: and therefore it is (a new order of things having suddenly sprung up in Europe) that he knows not what to do in the present exigence, and that his conduct is marked with nothing but indecision, incongruity, and absurdity—yet to such an ally we give 4,600,000*l.*

But there is another of our allies who is to be regarded in a more serious point of view—an ally whom I shall treat with the utmost gravity and decorum; for you know it is not very polite to level the shafts of ridicule against the ladies. You will perceive that I can mean no other than our most august, most active, most virtuous, most humane, and most pious ally, the Empress of both the *Russias*. I shall not attempt to speak the truth, and the whole truth, relative to this good old lady. No—I remember very well that Lord *George Gordon* was kept in Newgate till he died, for calling the late Queen of France by a name which it was notorious to all the world as properly belonged to her as *homo* belongs to all mankind. I shall not, therefore, when I am speaking of this pious, humane, and virtuous Empress, talk of wives who murdered their husbands and usurped their thrones, and afterwards maintained with blood what had been so bloodily obtained. Neither shall I attempt to delineate the many instances of her piety, and the zeal with which she attempted to convert the infidels of the *Ottoman* empire, by massacring them as fast as the ministers of her holy wrath could fulfil her sanguinary orders. Neither shall I delineate again the conduct of her familiar spirit *Zuwarraw*, at *Warsaw*.

But there is a part of her character which I think it my duty seriously to consider: I mean that part of her political character, by which she appears to me to have been stimulated to take part in the present intrigues and dissensions of Europe. Ever since she has been seated on the throne of *Moscow*, is it possible to be blind to the ambitious projects which this woman has been forming? Is it possible to be blind to the gigantic strides she has made towards the accomplishment of these designs? Is it possible to be blind to the consequent mischiefs which are rising from these projects? Is it possible to be blind to the policy of her present conduct? While combinations



binations are forming between the powers of Europe, for objects the most extravagant and unattainable, she pretends to make herself a party, in order to stimulate their frantic activity; and while they are exhausting their strength in this ridiculous crusade, she, sitting aloof from the storm, husbands her resources, and reserves her strength, and, ever and anon, when the combatants begin to grow languid, heartens them up with vague and delusive promises, or rouses their passions with an inflammatory manifesto.

Does this conduct mark the subtilty of intriguing ambition, or does it not? Does it, or does it not look like the conduct of one who has projects that may be advanced by the weakness of the respective combatants? Is it, or is it not precisely the conduct she ought to pursue, if she really grasped, as by the late King of *Sweden* she was publicly accused of grasping, at the universal sovereignty of Europe? And ought we not to be alarmed lest we should blindly enable her to dictate laws to Europe; to destroy all commerce but that which will add to her own aggrandizement; to make the operations in the present crusade the means of extending her empire over that ocean, the dominion of which we have proudly arrogated to ourselves? The accomplishment of such projects may appear very distant; but should any event, during the present struggle, enable her to seize a port in the Mediterranean, the complexion of affairs would be immediately altered; and we should awake from our dream too late.

Cannot the fate of Poland warn us of our danger? Was not her conduct, with respect to that unhappy country, perfectly consistent with the sort of policy I have here ascribed to her? While the King of Prussia was exhausting his strength and resources in the field, she remained in politic inactivity. But, no sooner was he completely weakened, and broken down, and the *Poles* exhausted by their gallant struggle, than forth she rushes upon her devoted prey, reaps the laurels and advantages which *Prussia* had sown, and partitions the devoted country according to her pleasure.

But our Ministers are too busy for such speculations; nor would they, in these days of sedition and revolution, be so *jacobinical* as to question the views, and principles of the regular Governments of *Europe*. All their energies are engrossed in trying the grand question between Governments and people, and deciding, by the usual argument of Courts, the metaphysical problem "whether the people have a right

"to change their governments, or whether they have not?" Not knowing that the question is already decided, and that, altho' they should reverse the decree in their chancery of appeal, it would be of no avail, since whenever the people are inclined to do it, they will feel that they have not only the right but the power.

Citizens, it would require a greater degree of exertion than, at this time, I am capable of, to enter fully into the views and objects of this good ally: nor is it necessary, perhaps, to say much more upon the subject; for I think there are few people, the Ministers of this country excepted, who are so blind and stupid as not have some insight into her projects. Let us suppose that we continue to carry on this war; that we suffer ourselves to be deluded and cheated as we have been, year after year, and campaign after campaign; continuing all the while to be deluded by the pretences and promises of this woman, till the resources of this country are still further exhausted, and we suffer ourselves thus to be brought into embarrassments and distresses which may be nearer at hand than those men of wealth and property, who plunged us into the war, are inclined to think. In what kind of condition shall we then be, to oppose any ambitious project which she, unwearied and unexhausted, may think fit to avow? And, if these dangers are pressing so closely upon us, as I believe they are, it is not from republicans and levellers, but from the profligacy and infatuation of Ministers, that this country is likely to be brought to ruin and destruction.

Men of more generous hearts than those who have so long been rioting in the blood of Europe, would seize on the first friendly opportunity that opened a way to that mediation which, under such circumstances, must be the first wish of every one who does not, in reality, wish for the destruction of something more than that commerce which we have been told ought to perish, that the rotten boroughs might live.

But suppose that we have not reason to dread all that I have described. Suppose that I have been a little visionary in my apprehensions, relative to this Empress of *Russia*; yet, surely, it cannot be said, that there is *nothing* to apprehend from that quarter, considering the great strides which she has been making. Surely it behoves us rather to watch with jealousy, a power so ambitious, so cruel, and so faithless, rather than admit her into a sort of partnership upon that element hitherto the scene of all our glories, but where the treachery  
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of a false friend might, in a critical moment, prove more fatal than all the hostility of our open enemy.

Such, Citizens, appear to me to be the dangers which threaten us from a continuation of the present war, even on the side of our allies; if we look, on the other hand, at the progress of events at home and on the continent, what is the probable catastrophe that stares us in the face? Look at our fields, at our manufactories; look at the state and condition of the people—see the wants, the aggravated miseries that have been produced among us! Look at the enormous growth of the public debt, look at the unexampled strides which the Minister is making in the accumulation of this debt, during the three years in which we have been engaged in the present war! When we look at the facts, we find an expenditure vast beyond all comparison with whatever went before! We find that the taxes are levied with difficulty; and that, notwithstanding all the boasts which the Minister regularly makes, when he opens the budget, of the flourishing state of the finances, and of the prospect of the resources of the current year considerably more than answering the expenditure—yet, that like the morning and evening tale of the sluggard, the concluding and the opening account never agree, and when he comes to sum up the past receipts and expenditure, he is always compelled to acknowledge that there has been a deficiency. And what makes this more alarming and ominous, as if we had nearly got to the end of our tether in this iniquitous system of stock-jobbing, we find, by comparing the facts, that this deficiency regularly keeps pace with the extent of our new loans, and the consequent increase of the public debt; so that our taxes are no longer equal, and every year are less and less equal to the discharge even of the interest; and we are obliged not only to borrow the capital with which we carry on this mad crusade, but even, each successive year, to borrow fresh sums to pay the interest of the preceding.

Citizens, it requires no nice arithmetic, it requires no elaborate calculations to prove that, if we continue this game of growing desperation, it must inevitably produce a national bankruptcy.

Pause then awhile, and think what you are doing! think of the profligacy of your present undertakings—think of the wasteful expenditure—think of the misery, waste and depopulation, which has already been produced! think what are  
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already the appearances of society. Remember how considerable a depopulation has already taken place; how many useful labourers have been driven to the hospitable shores of America, where punishment for opinion is not known, nor starving industry to be heard of; where the first law of nature may be followed without dread of famine, and children are not yet a curse. There, where no frantic father, pondering over the future destiny of his offspring, and comparing his scanty rewards with his incessant and laborious exertions, is tempted to exclaim with poor Belmour in the play—

“ I have been thinking which of my three boys,  
 “ Some few years hence, when I’m dissolv’d in death,  
 “ Shall act the beggar best: run barefoot fastest,  
 “ Or, with most dextrous shrug, play tricks for charity.”  
 [Great impression—and a cry of “ *Encore.*”]

Citizens, the speech I have repeated was given by the Poet to the character of a Gamester; and none but a gamester, in any tolerable state of society, ought to be liable (or, so short a time ago as the period when the play I quote from was written, could have been liable, in this country) to be driven to give utterance to a speech so full of melancholy and horrible images. But now, in England, many an industrious tradesman, and many an upright honest member of society, with anguish of heart, may be driven to apply those heart-rending lines which, in answer to your call, I again repeat, and exclaim—

“ I have been thinking, which of my three boys,  
 “ Some few years hence, when I’m dissolv’d in death,  
 “ Shall act the beggar best; run barefoot fastest,  
 “ Or, with most dextrous shrug, play tricks for charity.”

#### FATAL EXTRAVAGANCE.

When, I say, you consider this depopulation, and this misery; when you consider the enormous expenditure of the public money; when you consider the shifts to which this proud and insolent Minister is evidently put, even in the midst of all his arrogance; when you consider the strides which he is going on to make (like a desperate spendthrift on the eve of bankruptcy!) When you see him still consent to pay millions upon millions, to an ally, who scarcely deigns even to promise his services in return—when you consider all these des-



perate consequences of the present war—the miseries of the people—the symptoms of approaching bankruptcy, the exhausted depopulation, exhausted means, and exhausted patience of the country—are you not led to apprehend a catastrophe, too dreadful even for the imagination to contemplate without horror?

But, Citizens, there is another part of the consequences of the present war upon which I cannot be quite silent: I mean the consequent neglect of agriculture throughout Europe. How many fields, upon the Continent, have remained unsown! how many harvests destroyed by the iron foot of war! what cargoes have been consigned to devouring flames, and floods!

Europe sees too late, and trembles at the dreadful consequence. The Minister, perhaps, may exult in the prospect that *France* is on the eve of that famine which he wished to make the weapon of his revenge, against all who depart from the sacred institutions of popery and monarchy! “See,” he may, perhaps, exultingly exclaim, “See the misery I have brought upon *France*! tho’ I could not cope with their republican energies, I have destroyed their means of life; I have pillaged neutral vessels, and seized their stores of grain! it is true it has turned rotten upon my hands! but still Frenchmen are starving! glorious prospect! twenty-four millions of people starving by my machinations! this is indeed a triumph worthy me!” A triumph? a triumph? Thou monster look at home. Stand up and face thy country, if thou dar’st; and answer for the consequences of thy infernal plans! the famine, with which you meditated to subdue the liberties of France, is gnawing the bowels of deluded Britons; and even the expected relief from our *Canadian* settlement has entirely failed!

Such are the prospects, and such are the consequences of a mad, profligate, and desperate war. Such are the fatal effects of national animosity and delusion!

I conclude, then, that the probable catastrophe of the present war is famine, desolation, bankruptcy, and national disgrace: a large portion of which it is impossible we should escape; though, if we have wisdom, public spirit, and determined humanity, we can avoid the worst part, by lifting up the commanding voice of popular opinion, and immediately abandoning that mad and frantic crusade, in which it is impossible to succeed, and in which, were success possible, its sole tendency would be to render us more enslaved and miserable.

ODE

## ODE TO LIBERTY.

BY G. DYER.

HAIL! more refulgent than the morning star,  
 Gav queen of bliss, fair daughter of the sky,  
 I woo thee, Liberty! and hope from far  
 To catch the brightness of thy raptur'd eye.  
 While not unseemly streams thy zoneless vest,  
 Thy wild locks dancing to the frolic wind;  
 And, borne on flying feet, thou scorn'st to rest,  
 Save where meek truth her modest seat may find.  
 Hail! radiant form divine, blest Liberty!  
 Still rove through nature's walks, and let me rove with thee.

Say, dost thou choose to tread the mountain's brow,  
 Or haunt meandering stream, or wanton plain?  
 Up the steep mountain's height with thee I go;  
 Or wake by river's brink the merry strain:  
 Or I will trip the laughing plain along,  
 A simple swain, 'midst hinds and virgins gay;  
 And still will chant to thee the even-song,  
 Unwearied with the raptures of the day.  
 And e'en when lock'd in sleep's soft arms I lie,  
 Still flattering dreams shall wake the midnight ecstasy.

Or dost thou choose to wear the sober veil  
 Of mild philosophy, and walk unseen,  
 Serenely grave, along the cloister pale,  
 Or in the pensive grove, or shaven green:  
 Then will I tend thee on thy secret way,  
 And from thy musing catch the patriot flame,  
 Gentle and clear, as the sun's smiling ray  
 At dawn, yet warm, as his meridian beam,  
 When wondering nations feel the piercing rays,  
 And think they view their God, and kindle into praise.

Such wast thou seen by Isis' silver flood,  
 In converse sweet with Locke, immortal sage;  
 Such too by Cam, with him, whose bosom glow'd  
 With thy sweet raptures, and the muses' rage.  
 Nor less with him, who bore to distant climes  
 His country's love, and o'er her miseries sigh'd;  
 Brave injur'd patriot he, in evil times  
 Who nobly liv'd, and not ignobly died.  
 Who nobly liv'd, whose name shall ever live,  
 While zeal in Britain glows, while freedom shall survive.



Or art thou wont to couch with lion pride  
 Near Britain's genius, slumb'ring as in ire;  
 Waiting what time thy children shall abide  
 Thy noblest form, and glow with purest fire?  
 Sweet slumb'rer rest! yet shall the times be found,  
 When Britain's bards shall wake no venal strain,  
 Her prophets give no more a double sound;  
 No more her patriots thirst for sordid gain;  
 And lawless zeal shall sink to endless shame,  
 Nor longer keep thy seat, nor bear thy sacred name.

But shouldst thou scorn at length Britannia's isle,  
 Then would I pass with Penn the dang'rous sea;  
 Yes! I would hasten to some happier soil,  
 Where tyrants had no rule, no slaves obey.  
 There would I woo thee, goddess, heav'nly fair;  
 Sing my wild notes to thee, where'r I roam;  
 Britons no more the muse's praise should share,  
 Tyrants abroad and miscreants at home—  
 E'en Britain's friend would publish Britain's shame;  
 While barb'rous tribes should hear, and scorn a Briton's  
 name—

But shouldst thou e'en from Britain speed thy way,  
 On Gallia's plains still linger with delight;  
 And while her patriots hail this sacred day,  
 Oh! aid their counsels, and their battles fight;  
 May tyrants ne'er, those murd'ers of the world,  
 Austria's proud Lord, and Prussia's faithless king,  
 Their blood-stain'd banners to the air unfurl'd,  
 O'er freedom's sons the note of triumph sing;  
 Still with the great resolve the Polish heroes fire,  
 To live in thine embrace, or at thy feet expire.

THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XXII.

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An Enquiry into the Truth of an Assertion frequently made in the "*Honourable House of Commons*," That the **CONDITION** of the **COMMON PEOPLE** IN THIS COUNTRY, is **WORSE** than that of **WEST INDIA SLAVES**. The Second Lecture "*on the Comparative Estimate of the Slave Trade, the practice of Crimping, and Mr. Pitt's partial Requisition Bill.*" Delivered Friday, February 27th, 1795.

CITIZENS,

THE number of facts connected with the subject, which I am this evening to resume, occasioned me, in my former lecture, to run rather more largely into detail than was at first my intention; and, therefore, compelled me to leave untouched, or but slightly touched, many of the most important arguments that relate to this very momentous question.

It appeared to me, therefore, not amiss to resume it this evening, and to endeavour to investigate those parts of the subject which I, for want of time, hurried over too much or totally omitted, on the last evening.

On that evening I began with some reflections upon the general character of *Europe*; and was particularly led to condemn the avarice and cruel pride with which it arrogates to itself the right of enslaving the other portions of the globe. My business, on the present evening, is to make a more particular application of those arguments to the character of the nation, a portion of whose population I am now addressing. And, on this occasion, I wish, from those feelings of vanity every man has, with relation to the country in which he was born, that I were able to draw a picture in which nothing but the most pleasing lines and amiable colours should obtrude themselves upon the eye. I wish it were possible for me to delineate a character in which every



thing should excite admiration and applause. I am afraid, however, if I discharge my duty, by dealing fairly with my countrymen, it will be impossible to have so grateful a task, on the present evening: for tho' the spark of reason has not only fallen upon the British bosom, but its flame has extended to a considerable degree, so that there is a great disposition in the minds of the people at large, to benevolence and magnanimity, yet I cannot be blind to the operation of those circumstances, which have a tendency to introduce, and, thro' a very wide circle, have positively diffused, characteristics of a very different description. I cannot be so blind as not to perceive, that, for a very considerable time, an illiberal, monopolizing, and *rapacious* spirit of commerce has diffused itself among the people; and, backed by those corruptions that have crept into the government of the country, has tarnished the character of Englishmen. In short, the over eager pursuit of opulence among one class of people, and the consequent depression of the other, have produced a notion among us totally subversive of the feelings of justice and humanity—a supposition that nothing is respectable but wealth; and consequently, an hardened cruelty, or at least an insensibility of disposition, so inveterate as nothing but avarice and rapacity ever can impart to the human character.

If there had wanted proofs of the existence of these qualities, in this country, the debate in a great assembly of yesterday, would furnish me with abundant argument to substantiate the position I have laid down. Let any man but cast his eye, in the slightest manner, over those arguments which were used, in opposition to a benevolent and humane motion in that assembly, and then let them tell me, whether virtue and enlightened generosity are, in reality, the only traits of character by which the present generation of Britons are to be handed down to posterity!

Citizens, I shall take the liberty of entering into a serious investigation of those arguments; because it will shew you, to what retreats the friends of slavery are driven for shelter, and how hard they find the task of supporting their system of enslaving one portion of the human race, to support the luxurious vices and sensual gratifications of another. A learned Alderman has observed, that this abolition, the abolition of the slave trade, ought never to be assented to—why?—not because slavery is just, not because we are entitled to the limbs, lives, and progeny of the poor blacks, by means of the *divine right* of our white complexions: no, this he does  
not

not attempt to prove: but, says he, the consequence of such abolition would be the loss, to this nation, of the West India Islands.

If I meant to enter very fully into this part of the enquiry, I am not at all afraid, but that I should be able to prove to you, because it has been repeatedly proved, beyond reply, that this effect would not result. But such a discussion would, I believe, be perfectly superfluous, in more points of view than one—for this is a part of the argument which, notwithstanding the boasts of some, the grand exploits of others, and the confidence of many, I am much inclined to suspect, will not be urged many successive years: for, notwithstanding some apparent successes, and

“ The fine yellow harvest we have got,”

If we look at the condition of our islands, and the energy of the enemy, and consider the resources which, by our perseverance in the system of slavery, we give to that enemy in those regions, I am inclined to believe, that the West Indies will be lost; not by the abolition of the slave trade, but by that cruel and rapacious obstinacy, with which we determine not to relinquish that inhuman traffic. For, if we will not *relinquish*, there is another nation in *Europe* that will abolish it—will tear it up and destroy it, root and branch, with the powerful arm of liberty and equality; and with it will go, I have no doubt, or at least soon after it, the whole of that system of colonization, whose soil is corruption, and whose manure is blood. [*A feeble hiss.*]

I am delivering opinions, Citizens, not wishes. I do not call you together to invoke Deities to further my prayers, or fulfil my prophecies. I call you together to listen to opinions, which I am convinced are the opinions of truth. With my wishes, be they on one side or be they on the other, it would be impertinent for me to trouble you: and, therefore, I cannot but conceive, that marks of illiberal disapprobation must arise from a trembling conviction that these are but too well founded; and the calamity, if a calamity it is to be considered, will be traced to the mal-administration of those, who, having no other way to preserve their popularity, send their emissaries into every public meeting, to disturb the tranquillity of investigation.

I, however, am very doubtful at least, whether the loss of colonies is, in reality, any calamity to any country. But if



it were, is justice therefore to be sacrificed? Are the sacred principles of truth and liberty to be immolated at the altar of interest? And, for the sake of wealth and aggrandizement, are we to persist in those practices, whose cruelty calls aloud for redress, and for the defence of which we have no other argument but interested necessity, the tyrant's constant plea? Yes, says the learned Alderman, you are: for, if you loose your colonies, there is another consequence behind; a consequence, connected with that disposition of rapacity which I have been obliged to acknowledge, in some degree, to be characteristic of my country, the loss of great part of our revenue, which would, ultimately, endanger the existence of the country.

The existence of the country! the existence of the country! How long are we to be deluded by unmeaning cant? How long has party after party, administrations and oppositions, rung the changes upon those words in our ears? But where is the individual who has told us what he means to convey to our minds by this pompous phrase? What, does the air of heaven depend upon our revenue? Do our streams derive their salubrity, and our meadows their fertility, from our revenue? Do the seas, that wash our shores, and waft to us the tribute of the world, depend upon our revenue? Or, is the aggrandizement of parties—the wealth of factions—the general fruit of this revenue?—Is this, I say, the existence of the country? And will mankind be annihilated when Ministers can no longer cover their tables with the wealth of a province, and fill the senate, and every department of an intricate system, with their creatures and dependents, the hungry consumers of this revenue!—But, flimsy as this argument is, it is not true. The revenue is not benefited by colonization. I stand in fear of no contradiction when I say this: and I do not say so, because the nature of this lecture precludes contradiction; but I fear no contradiction from the world, when I affirm that Colonies do not assist the revenue of a country. They assist patronage, it is true, dependants upon Courts and Ministers they assist; but they injure the real revenue: for there was never yet a Colony, whose revenue equalled the expences of its government. And as for their secondary operation upon the revenue, by means of their commerce, the genuine spirit of commerce abhors monopoly and restraint, and the example of *America* might convince us; that the best way to increase our trade is to make our Colonies independent.

But,

But, upon what principle, let me ask, is the idea supported, that to revenue we are to sacrifice the cause of liberty and humanity? Alas! the very argument stamps, with deep conviction, the justice of that character which I felt it my melancholy duty to assign to Britain.—Yes, it is my *duty* to convince you that such is the degraded state of our national character; because, till you are convinced of it, you will not lend your virtuous and peaceable efforts to wipe the stain away.

Behold the consequence of this rapacious avarice. Every thing is to be sacrificed to revenue; without which the wages of corruption cannot be paid. Every thing is to be sacrificed to the interest of a few monopolizing traders; because, unless monopoly goes on to an extravagant length, the extravagant projects of corruption cannot be supported. It is only by the growth of monopoly, that great revenues can be easily collected; and, therefore it is, that wealth is to be held up as the idol of our adoration; that we are to bow down, in reverence, to every thing splendid; and that measure after measure is to be adopted, project after project is to be carried into execution, to keep those who are poor still poorer, to push them further down the ladder of society, to confine all favour and preferment to a few wealthy and powerful families, and to make it difficult for any to acquire but those who have already too much.

But to illustrate still further this principle of rapacity, and to shew you its curious effects upon the rational as well as the moral faculties of its advocates, let us proceed to the curious arguments of that most honourable gentleman, Mr. Secretary *Dundas*. He is, you know, an advocate for the gradual abolition of this traffic: a man of moderation: that is to say, one of those who, not having the virtue to act right, and finding the wrong to be no longer tenable, endeavours to frustrate the cause of justice, by finding out a middle path between the two.

You will remember, Citizens, that in conformity with this system of moderation, about three or four years ago, when every guard and fence of the advocates of slavery was beaten down; and the friends of liberty began to exult in the prospect, that this great fortress of tyranny was about to surrender to the irresistible artillery of reason, *Dundas* stepped forward with his unexpected proposition of gradual abolition; and, under pretence of a capitulation, induced the advocates of justice to raise the siege. It was proposed by him, that  
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the measures for this gradual abolition should not take place till the end of four years." *Four years*, he told you, was a period that would make no very considerable difference to those who remained in chains and bondage—four years longer continuance of a traffic, admitted to be a perpetual scene of rapine, blood and cruelty, could be no great injury to the cause of humanity. Just as he told you, on another occasion, that seven months closeconfinement was no sort of punishment whatever. "Another reason," he says, "for giving four years to the planter was, that he might have some time to furnish himself with slaves, and not suffer a stagnation or bankruptcy in his business by a total stoppage."

Can men repeat these words, and yet be ignorant of their import? Can they lay down, after laborious examination, doctrines like these, and not shudder at the consequences? Has it not been proved to you, that the annual consumption (for it seems that human beings are to be spoken of as stock in trade!)—that the annual consumption of Africans in our *West India* Settlements, is no less than 60,000. Multiply—for, if we consider men as property, we must subject them, like other property, to rules of arithmetic, and strike our balances of debtor and creditor with the coldness of commercial precision.—Multiply this 60,000 by four, and you find, that 240,000 Africans were to be sacrificed to the moderation of this humane Secretary—for what?—why to prevent the bankruptcy of a few *West India* monopolists. What then—is this the enlightened and generous spirit so often boasted by Britons? or is it that spirit of rapacious avarice, that regards the lives of mankind, the happiness and liberties of thousands, as trifling circumstances, compared with the hurling of a few wealthy individuals from that rank which their opulence has given them, and casting them, for a while, into the humbler ranks of life they have so long been in the habit of despising.

But mark, Citizens, I pray you, the progress of this gradual abolition. The four years being nearly past, the same most humane and generous pleader comes forward and tells you, that *a longer time is necessary now* than was requisite at the former discussion. Though only four years were requisite four years ago, "more than four years are requisite now; and he thinks that the abolition ought, at present, to be deferred indefinitely." This puts me in mind of an anecdote, in ancient history, of one *Simonides*, a poet and philosopher,

pher, who was consulted by the tyrant under whose dominion he lived, about the opinion he entertained of the existence and nature of God. *Simonides*, at first, required two days to consider it; two days were granted, and when they were expired, the Monarch expected a reply. But, instead of answering the question, he required four days more. Four days more were granted, and at the end of these he came, not with his reply, but with a request of six days longer; and, at the end of those six days, he requested an indefinite time; "because," he said, "the more he considered of the nature of the Divinity, the more puzzled he was to give an answer to the question." And so, in the same manner, we have a great and mighty statesman, who finds the same growing difficulties upon a leading question of benevolence, as the ancient philosopher and poet did upon the leading question of theology; and he tells you, after having had four years to consider upon the question, that he is less determined in his own mind when the Deity of benevolence shall begin to be acknowledged and worshipped, than he was when he told you, four years ago, that four years only were necessary before the temple should be built.

But another reason why he now thinks a longer time necessary than at first is, that in war the planter has not the same opportunity of providing slaves.

Citizens, we have heard of a variety of trades; and we have heard of a variety of species of cattle in which traders may deal. In some parts of the world they are very famous for dealing in black cattle; with some, no cattle are in such repute as the golden calf; and there are other countries in which the cattle are all white. Now it happens, that while the trade of war continues, the traffic in white cattle admits of a quicker return, and, in consequence of modern improvements in the way of carrying it on, is discovered to be more profitable than the trade in black. Thus then, during the continuance of the war, it is not quite so easy to procure black slaves for the plantations, as it is to procure white slaves for the ships of war, and the ranks of a devoted army: and, therefore, you are told, upon the old system of bringing forward one piece of iniquity in justification of another, the slave trade is to be prolonged till the return of tranquility shall enable the planter to get such a stock of human cattle as may satisfy his conscientious desires.

If gold is thus to be admitted as an equivalent for life, if trade is to be set up as a thing of more advantage and consequence



sequence than humanity, and justice, can we be surprized that, in the same assembly, doctrines should be preached so abhorrent to the feelings of mankind as those I am about to recite to you? Can we be surprized to hear members, in that same assembly, declare that "liberty,"—hear it Englishmen, if you can, restrain your indignation and hear it with patience! "that liberty is not the unalienable right of man!" What is liberty then the birth-right only of *Britons*? for it has been called *the birth-right of Britons*, even by those *borough mongers* who swindle us out of the inheritance, and then threaten us with the halter for appealing to the title deeds. Is not liberty the right of all human beings? Or is the period come when right is changed into wrong? Are Britons also to be considered as implicated in this new doctrine? And are they also to be taught that their liberties are not unalienable? That they may be stolen by violence, or taken away by fraud, and that he, who has once been a free agent, may be reduced to the condition of a slave?

Are we surprized to hear in the same assembly, also, "that it would be inhumanity to the people of *Africa*, to leave them to their savage liberty; and that nothing could exceed,"—Mark, Citizens, the curious argument, "it is not right to leave the Africans to the possession of their savage liberty, because nothing can exceed the joy and consolation which the Negroes, in the *West India* Islands, experience, upon the arrival of a fresh cargo of slaves from *Africa*: and to rob them of this would be to deprive them of one of the greatest sweets of life."

And is this true? Have civilized and enlightened Britons sunk the simple character of savages so low, that they, also, can exult in the chains and torments of their fellow beings? And feel a wicked consolation, in the midst of their own sufferings, by finding that others are rendered as wretched and as hopeless as themselves? If this malignant disposition is, in reality, generated in the breasts of Africans, by the oppression with which we have treated them, what becomes of the curious argument which Mr. Alderman *Newnham*, thought fit to set up.

Citizens, I am no adept in theological questions. I do not pretend to speculate either upon the world above or that below. I am satisfied with the sphere I move in. I am sure I can do no benefit in any other. But divines, I understand, have upheld the doctrine that, if it were possible for a man to get into heaven, with the passions of demons and fiends in  
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his bosom, still he would be miserable; and heaven, itself, would to him be worse than hell. Mark, however, the very different doctrines of the pious Alderman, whose words I have before quoted, "he hoped that the slaves would have their reward, in another world, for any sufferings they meet in this life: but *while the life of our trade depends so materially upon their slavery, he would never agree to their emancipation.*"

Citizens, I cannot answer for the faithfulness of reporters, but the newspapers have given me this as the logic which this *honourable gentleman*—for "they are all honourable men"—used in the debate of yesterday. But let us compare this with other doctrines that have been held in the same place, and then let us consider what are humanity, liberty, and justice? We have been told, by some of the honourable gentlemen in that assembly, that *our commerce was to perish that our constitution might live.* Now we are told, that *humanity must perish that our commerce may live;* and that we must never think of emancipating millions of our fellow beings, so long as the success of our trade depends upon their groans and bondage. What then—*is humanity only a third-rate virtue?* Alas! how blind have been those philosophers and moralists who have hitherto considered it as the first, the only virtue; and who imagined, that nothing was excellent but only in proportion as it grew out of, or was conducive to this great object! We are now told that it is a virtue of the third degree. That humanity is to yield to commerce, and commerce, in its turn, is to yield to the security of the emoluments of placemen and pensioners, to the sacred rights of the proprietors of rotten boroughs!

Citizens, another argument that has been made use of, deserves also considerable attention. The argument is derived from the dreadful consequences of enquiry and discussion: those Jacobinical weapons with which some late infamous conspirators, "who," in the language of the Solicitor General, "carried their criminal enthusiasm so far as to wish for the establishment of universal peace and fraternity," endeavoured to effect their diabolical purpose.

An honourable member tells you, that "the discussion," not only the abolition, but the simple discussion, "may be attended with the worst consequences; as it would add a spark to the general conflagration that now rages in *Europe.*"



I know not what "these honourable men" mean by the general conflagration that rages in *Europe*. If by conflagration they mean the war and violence at this time raging over the whole continent, let them throw their censure upon the Minister whose intrigues produced that conflagration. If by conflagration they mean the light of political enquiry, I hope and trust the friends of liberty, unawed by threats or prosecution, will fan the sacred fire, will continue to cherish it, and keep it alive, altho' their own blood should be necessary to feed the flame; and that they will never neglect it till its sacred light has beamed into every eye, and warmed every heart in the universe.

Not such, however, are the sentiments of those "honourable men" who constitute the infallible majority of that honourable House. O, the enquiry is certainly a shocking enquiry, echo they. It is a dreadful enquiry at this time. You must not touch the subject at this period, the terms *liberty, justice, slavery*, will ring in your ears for ever, and lead to speculations and principles which at such a time are horrible. True, says Mr. Secretary *Dundas*, rising with the whole weight and patronage of *Scotland* upon his shoulders; true, says he, heaving and straining under that accumulation of places and emoluments, under which he has the misfortune to groan; true, the subject is horrible: "the islands are already in a state of sedition; and if liberty is given them, it is probable they will use their liberty in a very improper manner. Let us think also of the situation of the affairs at home;" (let us consider in what a ticklish situation our places, pensions and emoluments are at this instant.) "Even conversation on the subject, now, can only excite confusion and agitation; and, therefore, I wish that the motion had never been introduced."

And then he proceeds to shew another excellent reason, the necessity of subordination, why the House of Commons should not proceed with the enquiry till they know the pleasure of the House of Lords, which has now been three years nodding over the business. If the House of Commons does not venerate the House of Lords, perhaps the people will not venerate the House of Commons. Such is the interpretation—the plain English of his argument—for I quote not these as his words. I shall read when I quote: when I make interpretations I deliver them extempore, as my own. This is the true interpretation of his argument in reprobation

bation of the animated and generously indignant language of Mr. *Whitbread*, who with a courage and independence worthy a representative of a free and generous nation, reprobated the tardy indifference of the Upper House on this great question.

But mark his words, "The honourable gentleman, in pledging himself to bring forward the motion, over and over again, if he knew it vain to do so, and that their Lordships would be against it—he must say that the gentleman meant mischief; to excite tumult, by provoking a *fruitless discussion*." The author of this motion is a man, who, except upon one question, has always uniformly voted with our present upright, heaven-born, and heaven-instructed Minister: yet Mr. *Dundas* says, "if the honourable gentleman wished to give the alarm, that justice had not been done by Parliament in past years, he stirred the embers of *sedition*." How came Mr. *Dundas* to suspect, that the conclusion from the arguments in yesterday's debate would be that justice had not been done by Parliament? I find no such accusation from those who argued for the abolition. If I recollect right, there is in an old proverb—something about a guilty conscience—I refer, however, to the better memory of my audience.

But if we are to admit this sort of argument, let us consider awhile the situation in which we shall be placed. You must not agitate, in the House of Commons, a question upon which the Lords have shewn a disposition to put a negative; you must not meet in popular assemblies to deliberate upon "subjects which are in the contemplation of the Legislature;" you must never repeat a petition once refused; and therefore, the refusal of the legislature, like the laws of the *Medes and Persians*, is to be considered as irrevocable; and it is sedition to attempt to agitate a question which they shew a disposition to lull to sleep. What then is become of your right to petition? What is become of your right of remonstrance, if even your representatives must not press a disagreeable subject upon a confiding House of Commons, without being charged with stirring up the ember of *sedition*? Sedition is a new crime lately started up among us, and like *Jacobin* and *Buggaboo* may be applied to any thing that the speaker fears or hates. Search me, ye lawyers (for I see there are several present) search me your precedents, explore your voluminous statutes, tumble over your high authorities, and shew me a definition of this crime, which, like the serpent of Moses,



swallows up every thing that comes in his way; or converts to its own semblance every thing that is disagreeable to the Minister.

We weakly imagine that we once had rights. If we had, they cannot be annihilated by a *vote*, nor suspended by a *nickname*. If we have rights, surely we have a right peaceably to investigate them; to remonstrate again and again; to agitate the question to day, to-morrow, this year, and next year, and again and again, till the mind of the legislature receives that light which may be struck out among what they call the dregs of the people, by which they may be induced to tread in a new path, and may alter the resolutions they may have rashly taken.

But this new doctrine of the passive obedience of the *lower* to the *upper* house, and of members in opposition to a ministerial majority, this doctrine that we are to bow down, with implicit reverence, and entrust every thing, without a murmur, to the superintending providence of the *Lords in Parliament assembled*, calls to my mind some circumstances which, though not generally known, are worth attention, relative to the manner in which the agitation of this question originated. The fact is, that many of those who first started the question, had no sort of inclination that it should ever be so seriously attended to;—that it was, in short, a *mere party job*. In order, says one, to keep the popular attention from grievances at home, let us enter into an enquiry respecting oppression abroad. Let us impeach, year after year, season after season, and Parliament after Parliament, a man whose only crime is having obeyed with zeal the masters whom he served, and whose system, iniquitous as it is, is not only sanctioned, but cherished and encouraged by the existing government. Let us talk, also, of the rights of black men, lest the rights of white men should be too much discussed. Let us go to *Africa* and the *West Indies*, that while the attention is engaged in things abroad, things at home may go on to our liking. But their opponents were longer sighted than themselves. They saw thro' the thin disguise, and determined to fight the enemies of liberty with their own weapons. They saw that, with proper management, the discussion of this question might lead to the discussion of principles, which afterwards they could apply to practice at home; and thus, as I have been told by a very valuable character, whose name I shall not mention, because he has already suffered enough from the iron hand of oppression,—suffice it to say, I have been

been told this by one of the foremost of the agitators of this discussion, that the cause of the poor Africans was made a mere stalking horse by both parties; many of the first, and apparently the most zealous promoters of the cause, having no other view than to promote their respective designs at home. In such a project, it is not easy to conceive which party must inevitably be worsted. And now that the supporters of old abuses, perceive, too late, the consequences, they want to crush the enquiry entirely; because they find that, instead of distracting the popular attention from grievances at home, it has rivetted their attention to the principles from the neglect of which all abuses spring.

But Sir *William Young*, with arguments as brilliant, and as weighty as if they were just come fresh from the mint, contradicts the language of Mr. *Dundas*, relative to the seditious disposition of the islands. He finds another argument to build upon, and therefore proceeds without ceremony to pull down the argument of his friend: and thus, says one of these honourable gentlemen, in reply to the other gentleman equally honourable. "The slaves are very loyal to their *Masters!*"—We understand now, it seems, what Courtiers mean by *loyalty*. I thought it meant respect and obedience to laws fairly made and impartially executed. But Sir *William Young* conceives *loyalty* to be a blind and implicit obedience to those, who think proper to lash us when we dare to murmur. "The slaves are very loyal to their masters; and (this argument is worthy some observation and attention) *there are no peasants in this country more happy than the negro slaves.*"

What, Citizens, is it an argument to prevent us from doing justice to the slaves in the *West Indies*, that the people of this country are reduced to a situation equally deplorable with those negroes, whom they half despise, and half pity. But this is thought too cold by the learned Alderman whom I have so often quoted. He says, "I affirm that *the condition of the negroes is happier than that of the poor among ourselves.*"

Citizens, I know not whether this is one of those statements which the orator thought self-evident, and therefore did not deem necessary to pursue any further; or whether it was one of those sudden rays of light and truth, which burst in upon the mind sometimes in the heat of investigation. But supposing the latter to be the case, I am rather inclined to think, that if this opinion had suggested itself a little earlier, when



when he was preparing the brilliant speech by which he hoped, no doubt, to recommend himself to some fresh contract, or little *bonus*, he might have pursued the argument much further, and thus continued his oration—

“ Nay, Mr. Speaker, so incontrovertible is this argument, that it might not only be supported by the actual experience of every *honourable member* of this *honourable house*, but I have absolutely written documents and calculations in my pocket by which I could demonstrate it to this *honourable house*: nay I can produce proofs from the writings even of the jacobinical advocates of the abolition of the slave trade themselves to support me:—for if this *honourable house* will turn to the work of one Citizen *Wadstrom*, on Colonization, page 12, this *honourable house* will find these words. As to the traffic of the slave trade, as the Whites practice every fraud upon them in the quantity and quality of the goods delivered, and in trepanning their persons, the blacks cannot carry on equal trade on equal terms, without resorting to similar practices. As to the injustice, cruelty and rapine, which, at the instigation of the Whites, they practice on one another, they are not more disgraceful than the well known trades of *crimps* and *kidnappers*, and *press-gangs*.” (The consequences of all which, as this *honourable house* well knows, falls entirely upon the lower orders of society). “ All of which,” he continues, “ are carried on without foreign instigation, in several European countries, and even protected or connived at by their governments.”

“ Nay, Mr. Speaker, it would require no great eloquence to convince you, that the parallel between the two situations is much more close than this *honourable house* would at first suppose; nay, and that wherever there is a difference, that difference is in favour of the blackamoor negro slave. For are not the people of this country suddenly seized and carried to crimping houses, just as the blackamoor negroes are in *Africa*? where they are kept as long as pleases their masters, or till they can find an opportunity to dispose of them! Are not the common people in England, like the blackamoor negroes in *Africa*, treated with hard labour, little kindness, and less food? Are not those who are kidnapped and doomed to fight for us, *will-they nill-they*, punished with stripes and blows, as this *honourable house* knows very well? And are they not crammed down into miserable holes, and dungeons, and all that sort of

“ of thing? Suffer me to call to the attention of this *honour-*  
“ *able house* the miserable situation of poor Englishmen—in  
“ crimping houses, and press-houses, and tender-holds, and  
“ I am sure this *honourable house* will then perceive that the  
“ blackamoór negroes ought to be very well contented so  
“ long as white Englishmen, whom this *honourable house*  
“ knows are of the same flesh and blood with this *honourable*  
“ *house*, are treated in such a manner. Nay, and for matter  
“ of that, if we were to do any thing for these here blacka-  
“ moór negroes, those there Jacobins might, perhaps, say  
“ rightly enough, that, if we are to be reforming, we ought  
“ to begin reforming evils at home, before we go abroad:  
“ for *charity begins at home*, says one of our wise old ances-  
“ tors; and if this *honourable house* does not respect the  
“ maxims of our wise old ancestors, how should the people,  
“ you know? And so, as I was saying, Mr. Speaker, I will  
“ prove to this very thronged representation of the people,  
“ that the impress holes, and the dungeons of crimping-  
“ houses, and the tenders, and all that, are worse than any  
“ thing the blackamoór negro slave experiences. For I am  
“ enabled to assure this honourable house, that poor English-  
“ men, when they are impressed, are thrown into a place  
“ called the hold: where they are kept, day after day, to  
“ compel them to enlist, upon bread and water just sufficient  
“ to keep life and soul together; and, if they lie down to  
“ sleep, the rats, that run about the hold, disturb them by  
“ gnawing and tearing the hair off their heads. I am glad,  
“ however, that our wise Minister is about to tax powder;  
“ for poor men will not now be in so much danger of having  
“ their hair gnawed off in these most miserable dungeons:  
“ because why? there will not be any powder and pomatum  
“ to tempt them. Whereas the rats, now, sometimes eat  
“ their hair, and sometimes their ears, so that when the poor  
“ men are induced to enlist, they look as if they had been in  
“ the pillory. And, Mr. Speaker, to keep up the parallel,  
“ and show this *honourable house*, that the condition of those  
“ blackamoór negro slaves, on the *West India* islands, is not  
“ worse than the condition of the lower orders of the people  
“ in this country, I shall ask this *honourable house*, What is  
“ it but slavery, to toil fourteen or fifteen hours a day; and  
“ after that, not to get a decent subsistence for their wretched  
“ families? What does this *honourable house* think slavery is?  
“ Does it not consist in stripes and bondage? In the whole  
“ produce of your labour going to those who have not toiled  
“ with



" with you, and nothing but wretched offals left for you?  
 " What is slavery? but having no rights, no power to mend  
 " your condition, nor no power of getting redress from the  
 " laws: which *this honourable house* very well knows, while  
 " law is so dear and wages are so low, no poor man can  
 " possibly get in this country. Nay, Mr. Speaker, is it not  
 " admitted, that the principal difference between freemen  
 " and slaves consists in the one being governed by laws of his  
 " own making, and the other by laws made by his masters:  
 " because why? we all love ourselves best: and they who  
 " make laws will always make them for their own advantage:  
 " and they who have nothing to do with making the laws  
 " will have no advantage at all. Now, it is well known to  
 " *this honourable house*, that the common people in England  
 " have no more share in making the laws than so many  
 " blackamoor negroes; and therefore, that they are slaves.  
 " And as, here in England, those who toil and bleed for us,  
 " are robbed of all their rights because they have so toiled  
 " and bled; now what is this but slavery? And, therefore,  
 " what necessity can there be for abolishing the slave trade,  
 " when the blackamoor negroes are no worse off than our  
 " own people. For what though we have a *Commons' House*  
 " of Parliament, is it not very well known that the *common*  
 " people have no right to vote for them? And, therefore,  
 " Mr. Speaker, one set of people making laws by which ano-  
 " ther are to be governed *will-they nill-they*, makes them slaves;  
 " and as the slave trade goes on here as much as in *Africa*,  
 " with this difference, that the slaves, who are seized and  
 " sold by crimps and press-gangs, and the like, are sold not  
 " to work in plantations, but to be shot at, in a war, in the  
 " success of which, if success were possible, they can pro-  
 " mise themselves no advantage whatever."

Such Citizens is, I suppose, the sort of argument which  
 this learned Alderman would have made use of if he had had  
 time for that consideration which the subject demands. He  
 might, also, perhaps, have animadverted upon the pending  
 requisition bill. He might, if he had chosen, have ani-  
 madverted upon the *unconstitutional* powers vested by  
 this bill in the hands of Justices of the Peace: such as the  
 clause that " Justices of the Peace for the several divisions,  
 " are to hold a Court of general session, for hearing, as the  
 " last resort, the appeals which may be made from the re-  
 " spective parishes;" by which, without any trial by jury  
 whatever, the liberties, and ultimately the lives of our fel-  
 low

low citizens, in the lower orders of society are to be determined upon. Of the same despotic complexion, he might have said, is the clause, "that petty sessions are to be held, "to receive the return of the parishes to such orders, and to "attest and enrol the men to be raised; and for hearing the "appeals of parishes, &c. against the proceedings of regulating officers;" and this, which is, perhaps, the most extraordinary of all, that "if returns of men, for any "parish or place, shall not be made within three weeks after "the service of the order by the Constable or Tything-man, "the Justices, in Petty Session, may summon the Churchwardens and Overseers, making such default, to appear "before them; and if it does not appear to the satisfaction "of such Justices, that such default has been unavoidable, "and hath not happened by wilful neglect, they are required "to fine the Churchwarden," without trial by jury, without examination of witnesses in open Court, "they are required to fine the Churchwarden, in the sum of thirty "pounds for each man!!! to be levied by warrant and distress on the goods and chattels of such churchwarden, &c. "and Overseer. If the Churchwarden neglects to attend "the summons, as above, he may be fined any sum from "twenty pounds down to five pounds," without trial by jury; without any sort of trial whatever. By the arbitrary will of the Justice of the Peace, he may be "committed to "the common goal, without bail or mainprize, for a space "not more than a month, nor less than a fortnight." And, all this for not being sufficiently vigilant in crimping, buying and inveigling those poor slaves, called the common people of England, into the worse than plantation drudgery to which this bill consigns them!

It might be asked, What are the reasons, why these clauses receive not the same revision which others, which bore less hard upon more opulent classes, have received. The answer is obvious, the revised clauses affected a set of men, who not only have representatives, but influence and weight, and whose complaints could not be treated with contempt. But as for these unaltered clauses, they are parts of the general system. Justices of the Peace are appointed by the Crown; and it is necessary, every now and then, to be vesting additional power in their hands, that they may *keep the lower classes of people in order*; who, if they had the Jacobinical right of trial by jury, might have justice done to them, when it would be more convenient for the exigencies of the state (that is to say, the ex-



gencies of Ministers and placemen) that they should be hurried on board a tender, or thrown into a dungeon, without any opportunity of vindication. For this it is that power is to be vested in Justices, to send on board the tenders *all whom they think proper to determine* "have no visible mode of subsistence!" And thus any man, who has rendered himself obnoxious to these petty Deities, without possibility of redress, may be seized and hurried on board a tender, to toil and bleed, at once a Briton and a slave.

I am aware, Citizens, that many other arguments might also be adduced, to prove the truth of the position, that "*the condition of the lower orders of the people in this country is as bad nay in some respects perhaps worse, than that of the poor Africans, who are doomed to slavery in our West India islands: who toil for the luxuries of others, but want themselves the necessaries of life; who furnish the nectar that enlivens our banquet, but who pine in sorrow and hunger; drink their own tears, and eat (at the known peril of the most barbarous punishments) the tops of the green plants which their own toil has reared.*

Yes, Citizens, I know it is not only in the West India islands, where misery pines; where groans are heard, where anguish sobs in the cheerless gale, and breaks the silence of the joyless night. No, in the wretched cabins of the poor artificers of this country, I have seen myself famine and disease, shuddering under the mouldering roof, and crouching over a few mouldering embers that no longer emitted one ray of comfort.

Go, Citizens, to that part of the town where our weavers once resided in cheerful abundance; but where now want, nakedness and misery unspeakable, throng every street, and make each tenement a pest-house. This I have witnessed, myself, before the iron hand of power tore me from the sphere of my active exertions in behalf of my fellow citizens. How must that affliction have been aggravated during that season whose severity has reached even the joints of affluence and grandeur, through folds of ermine and double wadded doors. How many of these poor beings must have fallen victims to that piercing season? The bills of mortality may represent them, perhaps, as dying natural deaths; but famine, miserable famine was the real cause of those diseases which brought them to their miserable end.

Relieve this slave-trade then, ye friends of humanity!—  
Abolish unnecessary war; abolish unnecessary places and pensions;

sions; let not one hundred and sixty-two borough mongers consider themselves as the sole electors of that assembly which, as it legislates for all, ought to represent the whole population of the country.

O Wilberforce, if thou art indeed that man of humanity which thy zeal in the cause of the wretched Africans would lead us to believe, seek not so wide for objects of thy benevolence; nor expect that redress can begin in the western hemisphere. The seed, the root of the oppression is here; and here the cure must begin. If we would emancipate our fellow beings, in whatever part of the world, it is not by becoming ourselves the slaves of a Minister that so noble an effect can be produced; if we would dispense justice to our distant colonies, we must begin by rooting out from the centre the corruption and oppression by which that cruelty and injustice is countenanced and defended.

Citizens I am warm, I cannot withhold my honest indignation. I cannot "see the sufferings of my fellow creatures" and own myself a man, without feeling the boiling blood rush round my heart in stronger tides. Let me not, however, by an imprudent warmth, stimulate you too far. Judge me, thou Posterity, who, without the passions and prejudices of the present day, shalt view my actions and shalt read my heart—I wish not to rouse to violence. I would warm your hearts with a holy flame; I would awaken the settled glow of humanity, not impel you by the volcanic explosions of anarchy and bloodshed. I detest, I abhor alike the assassin's knife, whether openly brandished by usurping power, or hid under the cloak of conspiracy.

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### THE HORRORS OF ROYAL AMBITION.

*From the BATTLE of BARNET, a Poem in the Peripatetic,*

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ACCURS'D remembrance of intestine rage!  
 Lo! friend with friend, and kin with kin engage!  
 Then frantic Britain arts and laws forsook,  
 Let ploughshares rust, and broke the pastoral crook;  
 While harpy Discord wak'd the brazen sound,  
 Whose savage blast each social feeling drown'd,

And



And call'd her hinds, in each fierce baron's train,  
 To spread a bloody harvest o'er the plain;  
 With War's dread scythe the horrent fields to mow,  
 And lay the boast of human virtue low  
 At each stern Master's feet, whose fickle pride  
 Waver'd, in direful doubt, from side to side:  
 As interest prompts (but dimly understood)  
 As private pique, or daring thirst of blood,  
 As sordid bribes, or harlot smiles inspire,  
 Or spleenful Humour whets the fatal ire,  
 Each brutal chieftain arms, with impious joy,  
 And feels the dire ambition to destroy:  
 Thro' kindred ranks red Slaughter breaks their way,  
 And pomps of heraldry their crimes display.

See helm on helm, and thronging shield on shield,  
 With proud devices darken all the field;  
 From sword to sword the beamy horror plays,  
 And from throng'd lances wasting lightnings blaze;  
 While high in air the threatening banners spread,  
 The white rose here, and there the flaunting red.  
 The dire alarm prophetic vultures sound,  
 And groaning myriads glut the purple ground:  
 While titled heroes hence their honours claim,  
 And float on vassal blood to impious fame.

"O! thou fond Many!" what hadst thou to do  
 In kindred blood the corslet to imbrue?  
 Ah! what avail'd the name the tyrant bore  
 Who trod your necks, or tax'd your hard-earn'd store?  
 One orphan'd babe defenceless left to sigh,  
 One briny tear that wash'd the widow'd eye,  
 If justly weigh'd, had wak'd a sharper pain  
 Than Edward's exile, or than Henry's chain.  
 But York's nor Lancaster's proud claims ye knew;  
 For humbler tyrants ye the falchion drew.  
 As herds to slaughter by their owners led,  
 Dumb, and unconscious of the cause, ye bled:  
 The *titled ruffian* the pretence supplied;  
 And as *he* frown'd the abject million died:  
 Each petty Jove, their madness to inflame,  
 Shouts the dread thunder of his worship'd name;  
 His blazon'd Ægis shakes; and thick they fall,  
 Till universal Darkness threatens all:—  
 O'er all the realm one night of Horror lowers,  
 And huge Destruction, unrestrain'd, devours;  
 With stride exulting stalks around the coast,  
 And snuffs the offerings of each vassal host!

[To be continued.]

## THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XXIII.

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*ON the Importance of avoiding personal Factions and Divisions, among the Friends of Reform—The introductory Lecture of the Autumnal Course; Delivered by J. THELWALL, Wednesday, September 2d, 1795.*

### CITIZENS,

IT is with great pleasure I meet you once more, under circumstances, I believe, considering the state of the public mind, still more auspicious to the cause of liberty than those under which we parted.

During the last season, the anxiety and zeal with which, in common with thousands of my fellow citizens, I was prompted to labour in the public cause, became so far injurious to my health, that my life was in danger of falling a sacrifice to my exertions. I come now before you with my health in some degree recruited, ready to repeat those exertions; wishing not by them to make myself any thing, but desiring to make the cause of liberty and the triumph of human felicity all in all, both to myself and you.

Citizens, you will permit me to bespeak your candour. The exertion necessary to address you, at the opening of a season, is much more considerable than those, who have not been in the habit of public speaking can suppose. Even this short recess occasions me to come before you again with that trepidation and anxiety, which the importance of the cause I am labouring in, is well calculated to increase. There are always great advantages to be encountered on the renewal of any exhibition, of any kind, after a vacation; and which must particularly operate when every thing depends upon the mind and exertions of the individual; and when he is to trust to the moment for that expression with which he wishes at once to bring conviction to the judgment, and rouse the amiable feelings of the soul. This difficulty is still more increased from the impediments thrown in the way of mental preparation, by the attention I have been obliged to pay to the enlargement of the room, and the arrangement of the accommodations necessary for the throngs of auditors, who honour this place by their attendance. I trust, therefore, you will

No. XXIII.

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listen



listen with candour to the efforts I make this evening, and that you will pass over those defects which result from the circumstances under which I stand, and attribute them to the right causes.

Another disadvantage I labour under, upon this occasion, results from my having been induced, by particular circumstances, to make some alteration in my plan. It was my intention to have commenced this course with a very different subject from that which I am going to bring before you. During my recess my time has been, of course, divided between contemplating those beautiful scenes, which abound in the part of the country I retired to, viewing the state of society, (calamitous and miserable enough, indeed, even in the midst of that Eden of fertility!) and in directing my mind to those pursuits which might better enable me to do justice to the arduous situation in which I stand. These circumstances co-operating together, with the accident of having devoted some serious attention to the political works of Hume, and particularly my having fallen, in this course of reading, upon his essay on eloquence, induced me to chuse, as an introduction to this course of lectures, an enquiry into the natural connection between eloquence and liberty, and a refutation of some of the sophisms which that ingenious philosopher introduced into that essay, not very friendly to the cause of truth and liberty. I had occasion, however, as soon as I came to London, to change this plan. I had the mortification to observe, that among the friends of liberty and reform, there were strong symptoms of the growth of a disposition to *envy*, *faction*, and *division*, against which every true friend to the rights and happiness of mankind will be anxious to set his face.

I am well aware, and you will easily perceive, that nothing can be so fatal to the progress of liberty as a spirit of this kind; and that, therefore, there is nothing which it is so important to expose in proper colours, that it may become the object of hatred and avoidance to those who, but for thus contemplating it, might be deluded to be the tools of personal faction, when principles, and not men, ought to be the objects of their attention; and when the happiness of millions, and not the quarrels and contentions of rivals or calumniators, ought to engross the faculties, and call forth the energies of the human mind.

Citizens, I am not desirous of inflaming but of healing divisions, and I will admit that a disposition to *supicion*, which

which is one of the chief causes of those factions, into which the advocates for the cause of liberty so frequently split, does not always, as at first sight one might be led to suppose, proceed from the worst and basest of motives that actuate the human mind. There are generous qualities in the characters of men so nearly allied to certain vices and foibles, that it is not found a very difficult matter, amongst the agents of corruption, to turn the very virtues that should warm our bosoms into scorpions to sting our peace; and, instead of suffering them to be conducive to our happiness, to make them instruments of our destruction. If we consider the real character of the principle of liberty, we shall find that it is naturally connected with a certain degree of jealousy. The great importance of the principle we are contending for, occasions a thousand anxieties relative to those whose exertions we look up to for the promotion of its success: as the tender mother suggests a thousand fears and apprehensions, relative to the welfare of her babe, while the hireling regards, with perfect indifference, all those probabilities of injury and danger with which the little cherub may appear surrounded: So, frequently, in our anxiety and zeal for the cause of liberty, in our conviction of the great importance of promoting that principle, we are apt to have our minds perturbed with a thousand needless apprehensions, and frequently to glance the eye of suspicion at the actions of our fellow citizens, when, if we had the cause less at heart, this feeling might not be so prevalent.

I am, therefore, ready to make some apology, for those who may be active in disseminating suspicions: but I wish it to be remembered how far this apology ought to go. We may *excuse*—we ought to *applaud* the man who weighs every circumstance, who scrutinizes every action, who dives to the very bottom of the soul of any individual, or set of individuals, before he reposes that confidence in them, which, if they are unworthy of it, they may hereafter abuse to the injury of the cause: but there is a wide difference between *caution* and *calumny*; between *jealous circumspection*, and the *factionous spirit of cabal and ferocious denunciation*: one may be excused from the good qualities of the heart or soundness of judgment which frequently produces it: the other, if it does not proceed from the worst of dispositions, must certainly result from the blindest infatuation; and I warn every friend to the cause of liberty, at the same time that he keeps the Argus



eye of jealous scrutiny upon the conduct of every man, at the same time that he anxiously forbears to repose any more confidence in any man than results from the *necessity* of the circumstances under which we are placed may require.—I warn every friend of liberty to avoid that malignant disposition to calumny, suspicion, and denunciation, which has disgraced the otherwise glorious revolution of France; has brought to the grave so many virtuous and enlightened characters; has annihilated so much intellect, that might otherwise still have been flashing light, truth and conviction through the universe; and has occasioned that country, after all its struggles for the glorious principle of equality, to go backward, instead of forward, in the career of truth and justice; and to relinquish some of the most noble principles that were ever propagated for the felicity and moral advancement of man.

Citizens, this disposition to jealousy which actuates, and which under proper regulations, ought to actuate the breasts of those who are zealous for the cause of liberty, has not escaped the observation of the tools of ministerial corruption. The spies and agents of the infernal system of *despotism veiled under the semblance of law and constitution*, despairing of success from other efforts, conscious that, like all men engaged in a bad cause, every step that they take to extricate themselves from the difficulties into which they are plunged, will but embarrass them still more;—conscious that every effort they make to crush the cause of liberty, and extinguish the light of human reason, does but recoil upon themselves, and, like the flail in the hand of the unskilful thresher, destroy—not the *brains*, it is true, but the *heads* of those who wield it;—finding that their attempts to destroy the advocates of liberty, have but promoted the cause, and that, by stretching too far the string of despotism, they have so destroyed the energy of the bow of power, that it will twang no more, as usual, nor drive home the darts of persecution to the hearts of those whom they wished to destroy—Conscious of this, they have changed their mode of conduct; and being no longer capable of deluding themselves with the expectation of success, by exertions in the open field, they skulk behind the walls and bushes of pretended patriotism, and thence attempt, by covert arts and secret machinations, treacherously to destroy those who, invincible in the truth and justice of their cause, laugh at the malice of open persecution, and defy the storms of their arbitrary authority. Panic struck also at  
beholding

beholding, and who so blind as not to behold, the rapid diffusion of the principles of liberty through every rank of the community, they feel themselves called upon for still stronger exertions at a time when their folly and their injustice has palsied the arm of ministerial authority, and occasioned the once omnipotent hand of corruption to sink listless by the side they wish in vain to defend: feeling this they appeal to their last resort—they attempt to divide those whom united they cannot prevail against, but whose attachment to the cause of human happiness it is impossible for them to forgive.

“ We have knit ourselves together, say they, in one phalanx; distinctions of *Whig* and *Tory* we have buried in oblivion; and, thus united, with the legible proclamation on our foreheads, that we never had any other principle than the principle of getting into place when out, and keeping in when in—With this proclamation, engraved in brass, and stuck upon every frontlet, we have armed ourselves with lawless arrogance, and with this weapon and this impenetrable helmet, we wish to protect ourselves in the places of power and emolument, which, at the expence of almost thirty millions of taxation upon the groaning people, we have monopolized to ourselves: but it is in vain that we have made our citadels so strong, it is in vain that we have thus armed to defend them; the multitude are a swinish herd no more; they have learned to walk erect; they have discovered that they have intellect; they have discovered that they have rights, and the starvation to which we have reduced them, disposes them to demand those rights; we must, therefore, set them together by the ears among themselves, as quickly as we can,—induce them to hate each other, and cut each other’s throats—or, at least, to blast each other’s characters, and disgust each other with the thankless pursuits they are engaged in, or else farewell to all those golden visions of hereditary places and immortal pensions with which we have delighted our imaginations and filled our coffers.

“ Strong in a just cause, vindicated by the zeal of honest advocates, and rendered triumphant by the intrepidity of upright juries, these champions for the rights of man will prevail, say they, against the sacred immunities of places, pensions and emoluments, if we do not find some other means for their destruction. Ye *Taylors*, ye *Lynams*, ye *Grove’s*, and ye *Goslings*,\* bring us no more your reports of what

\* This last mentioned wretch was in the room when this was delivered.

this



this patriot does, or that patriot means to do; even your forgeries and falsehoods, (though we know you are as ready to swear to falsehoods as to truths,) even these will no longer avail: ye must adopt another plan; ye must scatter the poisonous seeds of suspicion in every breast, and sow division between patriot and patriot; and if any little personal difference happens to arise between them, or any misapprehension or suspicion, you must inflame it into the rancour of party hatred and factious animosity; and then, perhaps, we may have an opportunity of enjoying our golden situations a little longer, and the system of corruption may last our day,—which is long enough for us, you know: for by courts and courtiers there is one maxim, at least, of one philosopher, which is always revered and held sacred—*When we are gone, let the world be consumed with fire: it is no matter to us; all our concerns are settled!!!*

“Let us then destroy the characters of the men whose lives we cannot destroy: let us calumniate those whom we cannot move; and if we can neither find juries corrupt enough to do whatever we bid them, nor assassins who are bold enough, or cunning enough, to wreak our revenge in secret, at least we will stab that which is dearer than life to the generous mind,—we will endeavour to send the honest and upright advocate of Truth and Liberty abroad into the world, under the semblance of a monster, as bloated with vice and corruption as we are ourselves.”

Citizens, for such designs it is but too easy to find engines. There are, and there always will be, men whose zeal and enthusiasm is greater than their judgment; and these may be for a while deluded. There are, and there always will be, other men whose minds are full of envy, malignity, and personal animosity; and to these a hint is sufficient. And there are, and always will be, others who, without having either done or suffered any thing for the cause of liberty, aspire to the reputation of being the only good patriots, by denouncing every person who has done or suffered any thing, and holding up to hatred and derision every one who happens to have that share of public confidence and affection, which they know they have not the ability, or virtue, or courage to procure by their own exertions. Such individuals will always be ready to seize upon the slightest pretences for sowing divisions and creating factions: not because they themselves really suspect, or at least not so much as they pretend, the men against whom they direct their fury; not, on the other hand, that they

they really wish to prevent the cause of Liberty from triumphing;—not that they are corrupt enough to mean to play the game of the Minister, but merely because they wish for that popularity which they do not like the trouble of procuring by honest and proper means. To these men “trifles light as air are confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ;” and there is no accident of the convivial hour, there is no individual circumstance in the history of any man’s life, so insignificant that they will not seize upon to weave the web of calumny, to blast his reputation and destroy his exertions, whenever it happens to suit with their malignant caprice, or be conformable to the views of their narrow ambition.

But though such dispositions exist in some few bosoms, and though the passions of those are frequently communicated, by a sort of contagion, to the most excellent of human minds, the real friend of Liberty and man will not be driven from the course of exertion, by all the calumnies and jealousies of Faction. Others may be factious, but the true friend of Liberty will rather be the victim of Faction himself, than lend his assistance to disseminate those seeds of division which he knows must be injurious to the cause of Truth. For it is not personal popularity that is sought by the real friend of Liberty: no, it is public good; and he deceives himself strangely indeed, who can imagine that he ever was seriously attached to the cause of public happiness and virtue, who can suffer any degree of injustice or persecution to drive him from a steady perseverance in those principles, without the establishment of which the happiness of mankind never can be advanced, nor the calamities of the human race removed.

There are other dangers, however, which result from this factious spirit—this disposition to suspicion and jealousy, against which it is proper to warn the friends of Liberty. The man who feels himself goaded with unmerited reproach is in danger of losing his temper, and being stimulated to rashness, which may be pleasing to those to whom otherwise he would be too wise to render himself subservient. He may be urged, perhaps, in his zeal to prove how unjustly he has been reproached, to acts of imprudence, which may be friendly to the views of those spies and tools of Oppression, with whom guarded caution, mixed with activity and zeal for the public cause, constitute the highest crime: because it renders the assiduous champion of human rights, who unites those qualities, superior to their little artifices, and places him out of the reach of their base misrepresentations.

It



It is therefore against imprudencies of this kind, that I would particularly warn those who may be calumniated, or who may have the misfortune to be thwarted in the prosecution of those pursuits of liberty and justice, in which they are engaged. These are dangers of which those who first stimulate to disseminate the principles of suspicion are well aware: and there is no doubt, but this is one of the objects for which calumny is frequently employed: because it is frequently seen that warm and generous minds fall into this snare, and lose the guard of prudence that they may get rid of those suspicions, which, instead of being thus thrown off their guard by them, they ought to treat with contempt, or to repel with the firmness and dignity of conscious innocence.

But there are dangers of a more alarming kind proceeding from this disposition to envy and suspicion: and I am very much mistaken, indeed, if (not forgetting the artifices and intrigues of the allied courts and cabinets of Europe) these are not among the principal causes of those excesses and cruelties, which have brought a stain upon some part of the revolution in France. Yes, I am convinced, that most of the crying acts of injustice that have sullied the French revolution, are to be traced to this suspicious and factious disposition which I have thus endeavoured to represent in proper colours, that you may abhor and avoid it: and I cannot persuade myself but that, if this principle of suspicion had been early eradicated, that we should never have heard of the wanton excesses of Robespierre and his party, whose principles I must for ever revere, though I abhor their practices, so opposite to every thing which those principles, well digested and deeply felt, are calculated to produce.

Had mankind, in that part of the world, experienced the advantage of a regular and gradual introduction to the principles of truth, liberty and humanity, which we, in some degree enjoy; had the scorpion malignity of suspicion, generated by the base and treacherous corruption of the court, been early exterminated from the Gallic mind, it is impossible that a principle the most benignant, the most glorious that ever warmed the human breast, should have been so disgraced as, for one period, we behold it in that country.

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I dwell not upon these excesses with a view to shock you from the principles of liberty. Europe is becoming rapidly convinced that it was not the principles of liberty that produced the mischief, but that the evil flowed from passions and dispositions the most inimical to that sacred cause. The principles of liberty are the principles of benevolence: for I don't understand what liberty means, if its object is not to promote the happiness of mankind, and diffuse through all ranks an equal proportion of rights, felicity, and protection. But let us observe the progress of suspicion: let us observe the history of the rise and fall of the respective factions. If two sets of men differed but a hair's breadth in principle, the high-flown enthusiasts immediately denounced the moderates as royalists, and advocates for federalism; while the moderates, if such extravagant suspicions can be called moderation, reverted the denunciation, by calling out on every side, that those violent enthusiasts were in the pay of the courts in alliance against the liberties of France; and that they only wanted, by the excesses, to disgrace that cause in which they pretended to be so warm.

If we examine impartially, we shall soon find that neither the one nor the other of these denunciations had any basis. The *Brissotines* were not advocates either for Royalty or Federalism: they were not persons who attempted either to restore or modify the fallen despotism of France: they were pure, they were zealous, they were generous republicans; and, if a doubt could have existed before, their conduct in the hour of death proved them to be such, in defiance of the calumnies that were heaped upon them. Nor can common sense, for one moment, believe that the energetic exertions of the *Jacobins*, those vigorous efforts of courage and intellect, with which they roused the nation to an enthusiasm unparalleled in the history of man, and drove the combined powers like chaff before the whirlwind, were meant to support the cause of the allied despots of the continent, by depriving them of their dominions, and reducing them to the most degraded state of terror and humiliation.

Let us then fairly and impartially admit, that men may differ from each other in opinion, without having corrupt and rotten hearts. Let us admit that even the most furious aristocrat may perhaps be deceived and deluded; and that he wants nothing but a little serious argument and investigation, to convince him of the error of the principles he has adopted:



that even he, perhaps, has a heart warm and glowing for the happiness of his fellow beings, though he is unfortunately ignorant of the means by which the happiness of those fellow beings can be promoted. Still more, let us believe that it is possible for a man, or set of men, to differ from us with respect to some particular measures, without immediately concluding that he or they must of necessity be hostile to the liberties and rights of man, and wish to trample under foot those sacred privileges of which every man, by the very circumstance of his manhood, is entitled; and which it is impossible for any set of men whatever to deprive him of the *right of enjoying*, however they may take from him the *present possession*.

But there is another reason why we ought to be careful of these dispositions to split into factions and divisions. What signifies, to you or me, what may be the difference in the particular parts of the system which you or I may have adopted; if there are grievances, mischiefs, and oppressions which we are all of us convinced ought to be remedied, let us seek, by united, peaceable and justifiable methods, for the amelioration of society in those respects, and leave the adjustment of more minute differences to the time when they become more important. Let us not split into fancied parties. Let us not give each other nicknames. Let us not distinguish this man as a *this-ite*, or the other as a *that-ite*: Let us remember, that not factions, but the great body of mankind, ought to be the object of our attention; and that their's is the cause that we ought constantly to labour to promote. But of this we lose sight immediately that we put those contemptible *ites* at the end of names; as if we were the adjuncts of some particular man, whom we have been weak enough to make our leader: not remembering that principles ought to be our only leaders; and that men are nothing any longer than they promote those principles which are favourable to the happiness of mankind.

Unfortunately, from losing sight of this great truth, the revolutionists of France have also lost sight, to a certain degree, of the grandest of those principles they have been so long struggling to establish.

I shall not enter at large, upon this occasion, into the investigation of the plan of government now before them. This will be more proper to be treated upon, when I come (as in a few evenings I shall come) to consider the indefeasible right of annual Parliaments and universal suffrage. But  
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let it be remembered, that the true advocates of this universal suffrage, the true champions of the real and just equality of man, the true champions for the abolition of the odious distinction between *citizens and low people* (so odiously restored by this last plan of the constitution in France) brought themselves into disgrace, by the cruelties engendered by faction and suspicion; and brought, by these means, some degree of odium upon the principles they supported: and thus France, after a struggle of so many years, seems in danger of losing, by its factions and suspicions, the glorious principle of universal equality.—I don't mean equality of property. No man was ever wicked enough to put that into the heads of mankind, till *Reeves* and his associators made their appearance among us. He and his colleagues were the incendiaries who broached that doctrine; and if it should unfortunately (which I hope and trust it never will) sink into the hearts of the common people; they are the guilty wretches who, at the bar of this country, ought to answer for all the massacres and mischiefs which so absurd an idea has a tendency to produce.

It is not then this ruffian principle of equality, it is the real, the just principle of equality, which says that all men—as Paine has beautifully expressed it, in that glorious and immortal work lately sent by him into the world—all men by the right of their manhood possess, and to which “their persons are their title deeds.” This is the sort of equality—an equality of rights, for which I stand up as the advocate: the equality which says that the man, who produces every thing by his labour, shall be as well protected as he who enjoys every thing by the advantages of his ingenuity, or the accidents and circumstances under which he is placed. This is the principle of equality that I defend. This is the principle of equality, which I could almost drop from the bottom of my heart a tear of blood to behold, that the people of France are upon the eve of relinquishing. And relinquish it, according to this compromising constitution they will—at least in theory, though the framers of the plan have glossed it over with expedients, in the hope of rendering it palatable.

If, therefore, fellow citizens, you are really advocates for the rights and happiness of mankind—if you really believe that *fundamental truths* ought always to be adhered to; that *expedients* should be left to shuffling knaves, and *first principles* be the land marks to direct the virtuous advocates for the



happiness of the human race—if you really wish to promote the cause of liberty—if you wish that the crops, produced by your luxuriant soil, should no longer be sent to feed *Hessians, Austrians, Croats, Bohemians, and Hanoverians*—if you wish that *emigrant locusts* should no longer devour the fertility of this country—if you wish that the consequence of your industry should be plenty, that the consequence of plenty should be universal and equally diffused happiness—if you wish that those calamities under which we groan should be removed; that famine should be driven from our doors; that inordinate taxation should no longer be heaped upon our shoulders, to support in idle luxury and splendor those tools of corruption, placemen and pensioners—if you really wish to promote your own happiness, and that of your fellow beings, dismiss from your minds the sordid principle of unfounded suspicion; avoid, by all means, splitting yourselves into factions and divisions; let Candour, the best anchor of Freedom, keep you to your moorings; and when you do sail forward in quest of public happiness, let Humanity and Justice be the pilots that direct your course, and Unanimity and Benevolent Feeling be the mariner and the gale that direct and waft you to your port.

If, Citizens, you will thus adhere to the great compass of principle and reason—though I pretend not to be God Almighty's nephew—though I cannot pretend to point out the oak under which I have lain while the dove of inspiration whispered in my ear, yet I will venture to predict, *the day is not distant when the condition of Britons must be improved.* Knowledge is widely diffusing itself among mankind; the principle of Liberty has had a most rapid spread indeed, during the last six or eight months; mankind begin to feel, in different parts of the country, as they ought; and I have been astonished to observe how numerous the advocates of Liberty are, even amongst those ranks and conditions of life in which we have been generally used to expect nothing but a servile compliance with the corruptions of aristocracy, and the usurpations of ministerial tyranny. Shall we then relinquish this great pursuit from personal motives? Shall we render ourselves unworthy of the liberty we seek, and thus lose the liberty we wish to obtain? or shall we, uniting heart and hand, press boldly forward, by just, spirited, and peaceful exertions, towards the accomplishment of our object—towards the attainment of that liberty to which I trust all from their hearts  
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are attached? And if there are any who now hear me, or who may hereafter hear the doctrines that I have this night delivered, who feel (which, under the restraints of principle, it is justifiable to feel) an emulation and ambition to obtain the applauses and affections of their fellow-citizens, let them take from me one short and simple lesson.—“It is in vain that we make disputes about interest and duty. If we wish to live among persons of enlightened intellect, we shall find that interest and duty are one; that he who labours to promote the general happiness, brings to his own heart a satisfaction greater than any selfish exertions ever could produce; and that he who, instead of looking for popularity, looks to the promotion of public happiness, intelligence and virtue, will earn eventually a more durable reputation, than envy, cabal, and jealousy, ever were capable of obtaining. Let us not forget that the reputation obtained by intrigue, the popularity purchased by denunciation, suspicion, faction, jealousy, and envy, is short-lived indeed, while that which is obtained by principle and magnanimity will last for ever.—The fame of *Marat* flourished but for a day, because built upon faction, violence, and injustice; but the glory of *Thomas Paine* (who has built his reputation upon principles and integrity, and an unfeigned zeal for human happiness) stands upon a rock that never can be shaken. So long as the tongue of man can articulate the names of those heroes who have benefitted mankind, so long, in defiance of persecution, will the name of *Thomas Paine* resound throughout the world: for though I may not, nor perhaps any other of his admirers, agree with all that he has said in all his works, or the precise manner in which he has sometimes treated his subject, yet, whoever observes the tenor of his writings and conduct, must admit ‘this was a man of principle, who laboured for the  
 ‘ promotion of the happiness of mankind; who kept himself  
 ‘ aloof and independent of all faction:—this therefore is the  
 ‘ man who has built himself a solid and lasting reputation,  
 ‘ because he fought for that reputation alone by promoting  
 ‘ the happiness and welfare of man.”

\*\*\* *The following Passages constituted a Digression in the Second Lecture, but they belong more properly to this, and are therefore here introduced.*

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I have spoken thus far in general terms; because it is the general cause, not the particular feeling that principally actuates my mind. Considering however, the industry with which, during my absence from town, calumny has been employed against me, it may not be improper to make a few brief observations upon that subject: at the same time I shall carefully avoid all personalities and retaliation; as my object is to prevent, not to increase dissention; and as it is a part of my system to have no personal quarrels, and to cherish no animosities against any man who is labouring in the public cause whatever may have been his conduct to me in particular.

It is not difficult to perceive the source of these misrepresentations. There are undoubtedly many well-meaning, but indiscrete men, who are angry with me for withdrawing myself from the popular society; a measure, the motives of which I fully explained in the concluding lecture of the last season\*; and which the doctrines enforced from this place sufficiently prove to have sprung from no departure from those principles of liberty to which I have so long been pledged. It was also easy to foresee, that a situation like this could not be occupied without exciting the envy and jealousy of those who have not magnanimity enough to look with complacency upon the good fortune of their fellow-citizens.

Alas—those who envy me the applauses and emoluments of this situation, know but little of the cares that surround it. They perceive and *exaggerate*† the external advantages; but they know nothing of the internal difficulties—the constant labour, the perpetual anxiety, and the sacrifice of health, strength, and social enjoyment, which it demands. If those things had been considered but ever so slightly, surely it would not have been difficult to find a reason, why a little retire-

\* See Tribune, Number XV.

† The emoluments of the lecture room (if in this age of persecution a situation in which a man stands up to speak the truth could be regarded as permanent) when the incumbrances produced by three years persecution and disappointment are cleared away, would, it is true, be more than sufficient to satisfy my simple wants. But those who count over the gain by an exaggerated calculation of numbers, little suspect that my expences, independent of house-keeping, &c. are little short of 400l. a year.

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ment, in a distant part of the country should have appeared desirable to me, without inventing the paltry story of my having accepted a pension from that *caitiff-minister* who formerly attempted to pension me with a gibbet and an axe.

Citizens, I was not now to learn that calumny is the inevitable attendant of all active exertions; and that he who wishes to benefit mankind in any way whatever, must be content to receive, as part of his wages, not only the hatred and malevolence of those whose corruptions he would undermine, but of others also whose factious intolerance cannot bear the slightest difference of opinion from the infallible standard of their own judgment.

It is not unknown to me—it ought not to be unknown to any man that whenever we engage in any efforts to ameliorate the condition of mankind, if we escape the halters of aristocracy, we ought not to be sure that we shall escape the guillotine of faction.

I am not therefore astonished, that my back was scarcely turned,—that I had scarcely reached the scene of my retirement before suspicion lifted its serpent-head, and I was branded as a pensioned apostate who had abandoned his post, and abjured his principles. These suspicions, however did not prevent calumnies of a very different nature. And it is curious to compare the contradictory fabrications which were invented by the violent supporters of opposite principles who seem in a manner to have formed a coalition in this respect—or rather to have conspired together to place the poor bark of my reputation between the *Scylla of ministerial* and the *Charybdis of democratic persecution*. To the scurrilous forgeries of "*the Sun*" and "*True Briton*," I shall make no reply—It is enough to say, that it was in "*the Sun*" and "*True Briton*," that they were published. And to confess the truth, I have always had so much vanity as to be gratified rather than hurt at the abuse which ministerial hirelings lavish upon me. A report which has passed through a different channel ought not however to be passed over in silence, because it will exhibit in just colours the fidelity for which those gentlemen called *spies* are so famous, and shew you in the clearest point of view how much justice there is in the government of any country, upon the foundation of their testimony, putting their fellow-citizens in jeopardy of their lives.

It will perhaps be entertaining to hear, that while I was  
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Received by  
 Mr. H. B. B. B. B.



in the Isle of Wight, struggling with the attack upon my constitution, information was actually lodged by some of those virtuous spies—that I was at the head of the riots, pulling down a crimping-house in St. George's Fields. If you ask me the authority for this anecdote—I tell you that I have aristocratic authority. Mr. Ford, of the Secretary of State's office, has himself declared, that they received such information, while I, forsooth, not knowing what my spectre was doing in St. George's Fields, was 70 or 80 miles from the spot, and scarcely capable of stirring across my room.—A pleasant counterpart this for the report that I had retired from public duty upon a pension of three hundred a year. Citizens, I will not make any boasts either of my abhorrence of violence, on the one hand, or my abhorrence of corruption on the other. The man whose actions do not speak in his favor, deserves no credit for his professions: but this much I will venture to assure you, that whether I ever head a band of incendiaries, or become the humble servant of Mr. Pitt, I will never be bought for three hundred a year, nor *hanged for pulling down a crimping-house*.

But let us dismiss this grating subject: let us dismiss (if the warmth of youthful exultation will permit) let us dismiss all egotism—all personal feelings. Let me exhort you also, every one who may hear me, not, by misrepresentations and ill-founded suspicions, to stir up personal factions and divisions, so hostile to the cause of real freedom. Let us unite heart and hand, and struggle together in the great cause of human happiness; and, if we must have rivalry among us, let this be the struggle of our rivalry—not who shall most *defame*, but who shall most *merit*—not who shall *engross*, but who shall *deserve*, the largest portion of the approbation and affection of mankind.

## THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XXIV.

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*Report on the STATE OF POPULAR OPINION, and the Causes of the rapid Diffusion of DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. Part the First, Delivered at the Lecture Room, Beaufort Buildings, Sept. 4, 1795.*

IT has been well observed, citizens, by one of our most celebrated poets, that "the proper study of mankind is man." We may certainly then affirm, that in the present state of society, when political disquisition and novel truths are diffusing themselves in every country, one of the most important studies is the state of popular opinion relative to those questions with which the universe is agitated. Nothing can be more desirable than to know the state of popular opinion under such circumstances; because it is by knowing and duly weighing the state of this opinion that violence is to be prevented on the one hand, and persecution on the other.

Ignorance will always dispose mankind to exertions unfriendly to human happiness: as he who is groping about in the dark is more likely to do mischief to himself and others, than he who, walking upright in the broad eye of day, has the opportunity of perceiving and understanding the objects by which he is surrounded. It is therefore that, at this early part of the season, I come before you to give you my report of the state of popular opinion in this country.

I cannot pretend that this is a subject which has been merely suggested upon the spur of the moment. It was in my meditation before I adjourned the last session; and it was a part of my intention to employ a considerable proportion of the summer recess in observing and collecting the necessary facts in different parts of the country. If strength had enabled me to fulfill my designs, I should have been able to come before you on the present evening with a much more ample and satisfactory account than I can at present pretend to present. It was my intention to have divided my time principally between studious retirement, and democratic pedestrian rambles, from which

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the opinions of different classes of society may be collected.— In these rambles I meant to mix with all classes who came in my way—for they are grossly ignorant who suppose, that a knowledge of the world is to be obtained by associating with *one class of society*: and therefore it is, that the most ignorant of all the ignorant animals that crawl upon the face of the earth are generally found among our high and mighty potentates and rulers.

I will grant that we are never thoroughly acquainted with society, without some opportunity of viewing and beholding the conduct of the highest orders. But as the highest orders are few, and the intermediate and lower orders are numerous, I will venture to assert that *it is better of the two to be shut out from the society of the highest than to be excluded from all intercourse with the great mass of the people.*

There is another reason why I would recommend to my fellow-citizens, democratic excursions of this kind. The man who travels in a post-chaise from place to place, generally collects no other information than is derived from the milestones he passes upon the road, or the charges made by his postillion and the landlord of his inn. He who, on the contrary, leisurely roves from place to place, and mixes with every company that falls in his way, has an opportunity of discovering the real springs of human action, and learning the real value of the human character. For it is not beneath the embroidered vest, it is not beneath the plumed hat of aristocracy, that virtue is to be exclusively sought. Many a time will this glorious principle, united with animating intelligence, be found under the tattered garb of the peasant, and in the bosom of the laborious and despised orders of society. To mix with all ranks of men is the duty of every individual who has the opportunity so to do: for it is thus that we practically learn that great lesson, so theoretically enforced, that *all mankind are of one family*, and that *mutual obligation connects every individual of the universe together in one chain of sympathy and reciprocal duty.*

“ And thus, as withal we excursively rove,

“ The mind will expand, and the heart will improve;

“ Till embracing mankind in one girdle of love,

“ In nature’s kind bosom we daily improve;

“ And, no selfish distinctions to fetter the soul,

“ As brothers to all learn to feel for the whole.”

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With these views it was that I marked out for myself when I quitted London, a very extensive rout: a rout, however, which I was unable to pursue: the plain fact being, that my exertions in this place had undermined my health too much to permit me to execute any considerable proportion of the project I had formed; and that I had scarcely set my foot upon the delightful shore of the Isle of Wight when a cruel disease seized upon that vital organ which in this Tribune is particularly acted upon, and threatened me almost with dissolution.

Such information as I had an opportunity of collecting I did not however neglect; and the fruits both of my personal observations and of my enquiries I shall lay before you; acknowledging, at the same time, that my sphere of actual observation was confined to the Island, the neighbourhood of Portsmouth, Gosport, the adjacent roads, and the city of Chichester. The last of these places I cannot mention without repeating by way of prefatory digression, a little anecdote which may tend to illustrate the sapience and dignity of the loyal magistracy of that corporation; and to shew you with what horror and alarm those most dreadful of all dreadful monsters, *the hunters of political truth*, are regarded by the official guardians of the constitution in church and state as now administered.

Upon strong and repeated invitation, I was induced to make a visit of a few days to Chichester; where I was informed a few avowed and unintimidated citizens, to whom I was hitherto known only by name, eagerly desired the opportunity of my acquaintance. To such an invitation it was not easy to return a denial; and I embraced the opportunity of repairing to a spot famous for its dependence on the famous Duke of Richmond; and for the unequivocal display of his right noble apostacy. I knew pretty well what sort of character was to be expected among the leading members of a rotten borough, with the palace of a great man in its neighbourhood; and I was not ignorant of the mean arts of official cabal; yet what was my surprise to hear, that the worshipful Mayor of this worshipful corporation, on the report of my intended visit, had called his macers around him and given them express orders to keep a sharp look-out to the preservation of peace and order in the loyal city during the time I should remain there; and that if the least disturbance arose in any corner of the city, no matter where I was at the time,

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that



that horrible Jacobin should immediately be taken into custody:—to be committed, I suppose, to the house of correction; there undoubtedly to experience the humane treatment of jailors and the comforts of close confinement, that Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas might again have an opportunity of convincing you, by their logic, that such confinement is no punishment.—But this, Citizens, was not enough. A very stately and pompous member of that corporation, who calls himself an Esquire, and boasts that he has prevented four petitions from coming to Parliament, from different boroughs and corporations in which he has a most constitutional authority and domination—this pompous gentleman we caught in the very fact of walking backwards and forwards under the window of the friend's house where I was, and clapping his ear against the crevices of the window, to overhear our conversation. We did not let the poor gentleman go without his errand: for all ancient maxims ought to have sacred veneration paid to them; and it would have been a great pity the old proverb should have been marred, that *Listeners never bear any good of themselves*.

Thus much, Citizens, for undoubted facts. If the positive testimony of one individual is to be believed (which, in a circumstance so atrocious and extraordinary, I grant you hardly ought to be the case) there is a tale behind of much blacker import. Such testimony as, if it were on the other side of the question, would send a dozen or two of *suspected* persons to the Tower, and suspend for a third time the *Habeas Corpus* act, that this Esquire-like eves-dropping member of the corporation of Chichester, with two other persons, formed a plan, and for two or three hours paraded the streets of Chichester, for the purpose of executing that plan—either to seize me by force, (that is to say, kidnap me,) or, if I made the smallest resistance, to put an immediate period to my life. I do not give you this as a story I mean to affirm as true. It is a maxim with me, that *miracles* are not to be believed on the same slight testimony as ordinary circumstances; and I yet lack the faith to believe that, however great their profligacy, the aristocrats of the country have courage enough to put into execution schemes so daringly infamous. Threats of violence, however, no more than threats of persecution, ought to terrify the advocate of truth from the duty of promoting human happiness; and feeling, as I trust I shall be credited when I say I have long felt, not only a principle, but a passion for the diffusion of political information, and the improvement

improvement of the condition of my fellow beings, I have not relaxed in my endeavours to qualify myself for the situation in which I stand. I have kept the Tribune constantly in my eye; and, amidst all the wild scenery of the Isle of Wight, the bustle of a great sea-port, and the social circles of Chichester, have endeavoured to collect, as far as opportunities would admit, such facts as would enable me to form some judgment of the state of popular opinion, at this time.

Citizens, in order to accomplish this, I have endeavoured to make observation go hand-in-hand with my studies; and, while one part of my time was devoted to the examination of the arguments in favour of despotism, from *Hobbes's "Leviathan"* to *Peacock's* Defence of Parliamentary Corruption, another part was taken up in observing the condition and developing the opinions of my fellow citizens.

For this last, the sphere in which I moved was in some degree favourable: for it is the *promiscuousness* of society, and not the *multitude*, that enables us to form in any degree a just idea of the state of popular sentiments; and the places in which I have been are particularly favourable to observation in this respect, inasmuch as they are the resorts of persons promiscuously collected from various parts of the country. The island, particularly, is visited for its natural curiosities by people from all parts; and it is among persons thus promiscuously thrown together, that I have endeavoured to form, as far as I was able, some judgment relative to the state of opinion. As to the persons to whom I was introduced, and the individuals who sought my society, on account of the principles for which I have been persecuted, I put them entirely out of the question; because these were evidently drawn together by a sort of *magnetism of principle*, which occasions us to be pleased with those who correspond with us in opinion. We should always, therefore, when we wish to estimate popular opinion, put these out of the case; and this is another reason why great and mighty potentates frequently betray so much of that ignorance to which I have before alluded. Used to flattery, and unable to exist without it; herding only with the particular set of beings about them, who cajole them with false pictures of society; and, taking their own little narrow circle for the universe, they think that the *great majority* of the people must be precisely of opinion with the *little majority* of the virtuous assemblies they frequent.

But



But citizens, it is in inns and public houses, in groupes promiscuously met upon the road, in passage-boats and ferry-boats, in, and upon stage-coaches, and the like—in farm-houses and in all places of promiscuous resort, where I was myself unknown, and where I knew not an individual with whom I conversed, that I collected my opinion on the state of popular feeling. Taking the persons thus promiscuously met as the fair though casual representative of the public mind, I cannot but say, that he must be blind indeed, who does not perceive the strong current of popular opinion daily increasing against the men at present in power, and the mad system they have been so long endeavouring to thrust down the people's throats.

Persons of all descriptions, and almost all situations of life, may be met with in excursions of this kind; and I have been pleased to find, that the opinion which I had drawn from my own observation was considerably confirmed by that of others, who had opportunities of extending their observations through a larger sphere. Perhaps it may appear an extravagant calculation, yet I believe it is by no means an exaggeration, to declare that, according to my observations, and, according to the correspondent facts I have collected from the observations of others, taking all the classes of society together, where you meet them in situations where they can openly speak their minds, because they suppose they are not known, a majority of nearly three to one will be found unfavourable to those mad and extravagant measures to which the present ministers seem attached. Even the most firm and furious aristocrats find themselves obliged to make considerable concessions; and there are some subjects upon which the whole country appears, in a considerable degree unanimous: even those who profess aristocratic principles, agreeing, upon certain points, with those who profess principles favourable to democracy.

Among these we may reckon several of considerable importance.

We shall find, I believe, that the opinions of mankind are almost uniformly against the late prosecutions; and that even those persons who seem disposed to wish that all the state prisoners had been hung up at once, yet agree, that the prosecution was marked with a sanguinary spirit, never equalled in the annals of this country; and readily admit, that *Pitt* and his administration have shewn a disposition for blood, though  
not

not so successful, yet but little less keen and ferocious than that which distinguished *Robespierre* and his faction in *Paris*. I declare to you, that I have heard persons who think no words sufficiently strong to reprobate the measures of the French, who think that, even as it is at present administered, there is something divine in the constitution of *Britain*, yet declare that they are very well convinced, that a closer parallel could not be found than between the present minister and the fallen dictator of France. This is no exaggeration, and I believe you will find it no difficult matter to draw the same confessions from the lips of those who were not many months ago the most zealous advocates of administration, and all the measures they pursued.

There are other topics upon which I have found the public sentiment still more unanimous; and you will remember, that the places in which I have been are not very likely to have given me an opinion over favourable of the degree of sentiment that prevailed in behalf of liberty.

The island whose charms and luxuriant production ought to render it the paradise of human felicity, is the centre of feudal despotism: a few lordly tyrants exercise a tyranny so cruel, that it is astonishing, at the close of the 18th century, beings are to be found so abject as to endure it. I will not mention names, because I do not wish to stir up ungentle feelings against individuals. It is to reform the system that I aim, and not to excite rancour against those who have the misfortune to be educated in that system. The prejudices and errors of society are what I wish to see eradicated: I do not wish to see men the victims of their prejudices and errors: Portsmouth and Gosport are notoriously the centre of patronage and government influence; and *Chichester* is known to be almost immediately under the potent thumb of the great, great, great, man whose consequence is increased by a tax of a shilling per chaldron on all the coals consumed in this metropolis. Yet, citizens, even in *Portsmouth*, which lives by war, the voice of the people is unanimously against this war; at least in as far as it is carried on with a view to the subjugation of France, of invasion or continental exploit.—It is true, our successes at sea have inflated the vanity of *Jabn Bull*, and many are much delighted with the idea of the British navy riding triumphant over the ocean, but in the boats that passed from *Portsmouth* to *Gosport*, I have heard the passengers,—sailors—and even officers of the navy declare, that they should like those conquests better if they found them  
productive



productive of any reduction in the price of bread: and I have heard even naval officers exclaim, with a degree of boldness little expected, against the political measures of the times.— I have heard them forward to declare, and I have never met with any person who was hardy enough to deny their conviction, that the calamities and miseries under which the great mass of the people groan are to be attributed entirely to the mal-administration of men in power, and to the foolish and ridiculous project of attempting the reduction of the French republic. With one of these citizen-officers in particular, I was considerably entertained: he was an old veteran, who seemed to have seen some service; and among the rest, I learned from his conversation, that he had been in the West Indies. In his zeal for the happiness of oppressed and insulted man, it is true, he was a little vindictive, but his heart upon the whole was rather brave than hardened. The mention however of the conduct of our *heaven-born minister*, threw him into a fit of true sailor-like indignation, and in the execrations which he poured upon the author of the present distresses of the poor, among other punishments which his active imagination devised, he had the almost Jacobinical wickedness to say he should like to feed him four times a day upon Indian corn, and let him have no drink.

The fact is, citizens, there is not a department in the state in which the ray of light and truth is not making its appearance. The army seems as if it were not much disposed to be longer made the meer tool and engine of ministerial oppression: *the honest soldier* begins to feel that he *has not put off the rights and duties of humanity, by putting on a scarlet coat*. He begins to perceive, that all the people of the country have one common interest; although the arts of ministerial corruption may attempt to make divisions between one class of citizens and another. In fact, the brave soldier begins to perceive that, there is but one class of beings to whom the affections of the heart ought to be directed, and that they are known, not by the coat that is put on, nor the trappings with which it is decorated; not by a black cloak, or a red jacket—but that they are known only by the upright form and stamp of humanity, which constitutes the only title to affection and esteem.

Citizens, this war was once, perhaps, so near to being popular, that what with the terror impressed on the public mind by a powerful faction, supported by powerful armies, it  
might

might almost have appeared to have a majority of the people in its favour. But whatever appearances were then produced, it can now no longer be pretended, that the voice of the people is with the war. Even aristocrats, who bear all the strongest prejudices of the ancient system about them, you will hear speaking with the utmost inveteracy against the continuation of this mad crusade; and the worthless wretches in whose behalf we pretend to carry it on. Nay, in this respect, the aristocrats are more inveterate against the unfortunate emigrants than the democrats themselves. The philosophical among the latter description of men, may drop the tear of sympathy over the errors, the delusions, and even the vices of these victims; but the aristocrat has no commiseration left for them; and I have heard, from the lips of the most professed advocates for existing corruptions, the most bitter execrations, and the most fervent prayers, for the destruction of them all. Particularly one afternoon I had the pleasure of riding a little way with one of those aristocrats upon the roof of a coach: for you know we democrats must not be ashamed of our principles, and there is no disgrace whatever in finding it more convenient to travel upon the outside of a coach than the inside: nor have I yet attained such refinement as to be much attached to "being shut up in a glass case, with a varnished cover over my head, like the preparation of a stuffed monster in the cabinet of a natural historian."—While enjoying, then, the prospects from the roof of a stage-coach, I was joined by an aristocrat, who happened to be one of the naval officers who had been upon the famous expedition to *Quiberon*. We had not then received the news of the catastrophe of that expedition: But my companion, after giving me to understand, that he was present at the landing of the emigrants, made no scruple of declaring his opinion, that every man of them would be cut to pieces: and he concluded with a most sailor-like oath, that "by God he hoped they would be so, for he knew not what those damned lubbers of emigrants did in this country, or why we should have spent our blood and treasure in endeavouring to restore such a pack of damned cowardly rascals to their estates."—Yet so far was this man, at the same time, from being at all infected with the principles of *Jacobinism*, as they are called, that in boasting what great exploits we should perform



form at sea, he wished that the Americans would join with the French, that we might "*blow all the republican rascals to hell at once!*"

Such is the opinion, even of aristocrats, relative to these gentlemen emigrants, in behalf of whom we are wasting our best blood, and reducing our people to famine; in behalf of whom we can find stores and provisions to send upon their frantic expeditions, while the industrious poor are starving, and calling in vain to their profligate drivers for bread.

Citizens, every fact that I have observed, every opportunity that I have had of looking abroad, whether I have drank my basin of milk in the stone kitchen of the farmer, in those parts of the island where you cannot meet (as in many parts you cannot) with the common receptacles for travellers—whether I have repaired to an aristocratic looking inn, or set down in little hedge ale-houses;—or whether I have crossed in the common ferry-boats that passed between *Gosport* and *Portsmouth*, or in the passage-boats that ply to and from *Ride*; whether I have travelled about the country on foot, have journeyed in a caravan, or taken my seat on the roof of a coach, I have seen, and glory to have seen, so wide a diffusion of the principles of truth and liberty, that I am sure, if the advocates for reform would but persevere, and preserve their temperance—if they would avoid factions on one hand, and being made the tools, on the other, of villainous spies, who wish to plunge them into violence, that the minister may have a pretence for establishing a military despotism over us, there is no machination of ministerial tyranny—no device of inquisitorial persecution (though *Reeves* could recover his reputation from that sink of infamy into which it is sunk, and restore those associations, so busily employed some time ago in disturbing the peace of society) there is no power upon earth able to snatch from us the glorious prospect of social amelioration, to result from the restoration of our natural and constitutional rights—our annual parliaments, and our universal suffrage, which corruption has secretly and gradually stolen away.

War and corruption have long reigned hand in hand, and the spawn of ministerial dependency produced from their fatal union, has preyed upon the vitals, the morals and

and felicity of mankind; while a few bloated vipers and serpents, glutted with the miseries and destruction of mankind, have swelled to a power and grandeur equalled only by the noble plunderers and empurpled ruffians that disgraced the declining state of the *Roman empire*.—Yet these depredators are the people who talk of *property*; and fearful lest justice should call them to account,—least honesty and virtue should be restored to their ancient rights, talk of protection against *levellers*—the frantic creations of their own disordered brains.

As well might the banditti of *Castile*, while their caverns are filled with the spoil of murdered travellers, when they hear that the officers of justice are on their way, barricade themselves in their subterranean dwellings, and say,—“Fellow-plunderers, we must defend our property!”

This system, however, draws towards its dissolution.—The symptoms of its dotage are already apparent; and the extravagant and preternatural exertions of the last three years have brought it apparently to the very brink of this awful catastrophe. Yet in the paroxysm of madness and insatiation, the minister perseveres in demanding efforts still more disproportionate to its strength, and more fatal to its existence. Experience preaches in vain; disaster after disaster in vain cries out “forbear!”—Mad Phaeton is in his car, and the world must be consumed before he will quit the reins.

Regard the history of the last years of his administration.—Mark the whole progress of this ruinous crusade—behold how ridicule has dodged the heels of all his wasteful measures!—how disappointment, disgrace, misery and absurdity, have stared him in the face at every turning! and then wonder at the frenzy of the man who can still adhere to his visionary projects.

When this war was first talked about—when it was first thought necessary to delude the people of Britain into a struggle for the extermination of Gallic liberty, you were told, forsooth, that *France* was presently to be conquered, and that the war could not possibly last beyond one campaign. Nay, according to Mr. *Burke*, it was only a phantom we had to combat—a mere imagination, which, as soon as the torch of British indignation was uplifted, would vanish away: for having put his spectacles upon his nose, and



examined the map of Europe, he declared that it was *impossible to discover the spot which once was France*. The king was gone—the nobility were gone, the priests were gone—the age of chivalry was gone, and *nothing but an immense blank—a vacuum, presented itself to his eyes*. You therefore had nothing to do, but to fill up this vacuum with an army of British soldiers and German allies, and the business, *hocus pocus*, was done at once. And yet, Citizens, not only one campaign is over, two, three campaigns are gone by; and if Mr. *Burke*, and the whole college of Jesuits to help him, were to put on two pair of spectacles a-piece (save only the little barren spot of *Corfica*) they could not find the speck of earth on which allied Europe can raise a trophy in commemoration of those great exertions by which they were to over run every spot of land where this nullity (as they affected to call it, and wished to make it) Liberty dared to raise her head, and the light of Human reason dared to shine.

Another of the wasteful projects of this great and sapient Minister, was the conquest of the *West-India* islands. But look a little seriously upon the state of affairs in that quarter, and answer me, whether the probability exists that one foot of West-India territory shall long remain in the hands of any European power? You would not abolish the slave-trade; you would not wash the guilt of blood from your polluted hands; you listened to the great Scotch logician, Mr. *Dundas*, and he convinced you that you ought to finish the century in the same iniquitous way in which it was begun; that it would be a shame to have a little patch of humanity at the sag end of that hundred years, the whole of which had hitherto been one continued scene of cruelty—of *West-India* slavery and *East-India* murders. You listened to this flimsy sophistry; you would not abolish the slave-trade; but if you had had a few grains of understanding in this particular—(I speak this to the legislature of the country—not to you, my fellow citizens—for I suspect that the majority of the persons who now hear me, did not wish to continue that iniquitous traffic!)—if those before whom the question was agitated, had exercised but nine grains of common sense and reflection, they would have perceived that the period was fast approaching, when it would be impossible, from the very nature of things, to continue the slave-trade much longer. They might have perceived that the only consequence of attempting to prolong it beyond its natural date, would be that effect, which, in a great degree, has taken place; the total and precipitate emancipation  
of

of the blacks, before they were fit to receive that emancipation; and, consequently, scenes of cruelty and horror which humanity cannot but sicken at, even while she exults in the prospect unfolding for future generations, when blacks no more than whites shall longer groan under the yoke of slavery, and lift up their fettered hands in vain, to remind their fellow beings that "they are men and brethren."

But monopolists—cannibals who fatten on human gore—wished to continue the blood-stained traffic of Africa; and see the consequence. You would not abolish the slave-trade, but the wicked jacobinical convention of *France* would. They would go a step further. I shall not commend that step. If any choice had been left, it is not to be applauded. It is only to be excused from the dire necessities of the times, and the circumstances under which they laboured. They went further. The whole herd of Negroes (rendered savage and ferocious by the cruel bondage in which they had so long been kept) were emancipated at once. And it is an absurdity too gross for human intellect, to suppose that it is now possible to prevent that decree from operating in all the territories in the West-Indies; though not so immediately, perhaps, as it will operate in their own.

This then is the prospect of the catastrophe of *Pitt's* famous project for conquering the *West-India* islands; and monopolizing all the profits, and all the duties, and all the patronage upon collecting those duties, of the whole sugar trade of the universe.

Another famous project was, the re-union of Dunkirk to this country.—But I will not dwell upon this subject. I have too high a veneration for the unfortunate hero who failed in that attempt. I will draw a veil over it, and not excite your tender sympathy by a relation of his disasters.

Next came the boastful projects of Col. *Mack*; who, with a sabre two yards long, and a pair of whiskers as long as his sabre, threatened to eat up all the *Jacobins* at a breakfast, and restore *Louis XVII.* to the throne of *France*. But it all went off in a whiff of tobacco, which seared his magnanimous whiskers, and obliged him to turn his back, to hide his confusion; not having, like some persons who shall be nameless, lost entirely the faculty of blushing. No—he felt the blood, not of *courage*, but of *confusion*, rising in his cheek, and therefore prudently chose to conceal his *shame*, from those to whom he could not show his *valour*!

Well,



Well, Citizens, projects were not yet at an end: and when all other things failed, then, forsooth, *Louis XVIII.* with a manifesto, full of the sublime and beautiful, in his hand, and pardons and denunciations, so hashed up together that one could scarcely perceive which was which, in his mouth, was to be restored to the crown of *France*. To effect this, the orderly *faith-keeping* government of this country persuaded the plunderers of *La Vendee* to break the faith they had sworn to the republic; well knowing that faith is never to be kept but with a *regular* government, and even with that no longer than is perfectly consistent with the *royal* principle of self-interest. They persuaded, therefore, the poor wretches of *La Vendee* to break their faith, and throw that province once more into anarchy and slaughter: and they sent an army of emigrants to assist these heroes of nocturnal plunder—for the Chouans are nothing else.—Proper allies for emigrants, you will say, perhaps, and for the patrons of those emigrants!—And these men were to make a conquest of *France*.—What, French emigrants to conquer *France*? Did not 70,000 of them run away in one day from *France*—70,000 men run away at once? Trust such men with arms—and expect great exploits from them! If there had been one grain of valour, if there had been one grain of honesty, in their bosoms, they would either have submitted at once, as virtuous men ought to submit, to the majority of voices in their country, or else they would have shown that they had the courage, at least, though not the humanity of men, and would have stood where they were, to have defended their principles; and not, like cowards and poltroons, with tears in their eyes, and calumnies, fictions and supplications in their mouths, have fled to other countries for support, in a struggle which they had not courage to support themselves.

Well, the expedition to *Quiberon* failed, as all rational men foresaw it would fail; and yet, upon the very morning when I departed from that part of the country, I saw another immense fleet sailing to repeat, as generally believed, the same absurd attempt, perhaps upon another, perhaps upon the same part of the coast of *France*. They failed—that is, the emigrants who were on board this fleet failed—amidst the execrations of all parties; and the only regret which arose at the foreseen catastrophe, was to think how many of our own brave countymen might perhaps be implicated in the event; and how much injury would be sustained by the people of this

this country, from the loss of those stores provided for this crusade, and its ridiculous counterpart, the West-India expedition.

How shall we account for this hopeless perseverance? Shall we attribute the conduct of administration merely to the phrenzy which generally accompanies despair? or shall we say, that persons in very elevated situations are lifted above the influence of experience; that their sublime faculties, dwelling always upon their own *golden* speculations, disdain to look down upon the events and realities which instruct a swinish multitude—or to regard the lessons derived from the common occurrences of life; and that therefore they persevere, in despite of the open conviction of former errors?—or shall we, as I believe we must, attribute it to another cause, more interesting, and more sublime?

Yes, citizens, all this ought to be attributed to confidence in supernatural assistance; which though slow, the stars perhaps have told them, is sure. In this opinion I am confirmed, by having lately observed, that our virtuous and excellent minister has got a fresh champion, and advocate, of most extraordinary and reverential character; and this not an advocate who stops, like Mr. *Burke*, to see the star fall upon the earth, before she admires it: no, but one who soars to the stars herself, and reads in them the book of fate by the optic glasses of aristocratical inspiration. In short, it is no other than the great Mrs. *Williams*; the far-famed fortune-teller, who boasts in her dedication, of her acquaintance with our most gracious and excellent queen, and avows herself the champion of trembling royalty. This heaven-instructed Mrs. *Williams*—and surely a *heaven-born minister* ought to have a *heaven-instructed comforter*.—This heaven-instructed Mrs. *Williams* tells our sapient minister, in her new book of fate (price 2s. 6d.—and pray do buy it, it must be a precious morsel!) that notwithstanding the ravings of Brothers, (whom by her skill in *judicial astrology*, she is enabled to pronounce a Jacobinical impostor) monarchy will be restored in *France*, that the Stadtholder will be restored in *Holland*, and that the present house of *Brunswick* (which God grant!) will reign to all eternity upon the throne of Britain!!!!

Citizens,



Citizens, I cannot blame the ministers of this country for seeking supernatural assistance ; for they seem to have brought themselves into a condition from which no natural assistance can extricate them. They have not only made those blunders I have already mentioned, but, worse than all, they have sought to overthrow republicanism in *France*, and they have almost occasioned it to triumph throughout *Europe* ;—they have sought to increase the usurped power and sovereignty of rotten boroughmongers, and they have sapped their power to the very foundation, till the edifice of their high-built fame and glory seems tottering into ruins : and we may shortly expect, that like Shakespeare's "baseless fabric of a vision it will leave not a wreck behind."

The plain and simple fact is, and melancholy as it is to relate, grieved at heart as I must feel at being compelled to announce it to you, yet it is impossible to conceal the dreadful truth, that the principles of democracy are spreading very wide in this country.

But I will not detain you, at this late hour, upon so melancholy a subject. I will therefore adjourn till Wednesday evening, when I will trace the causes of its dissemination, and point out the means by which it may be (not checked indeed, for I am afraid that is impossible) but turned to the general advantage of the community, and rendered it conducive to the renovation, and the ameliorating of our *happy and glorious constitution!!!*

## RIGHTS OF BRITONS.

\* \* In the former volume of this work, I took the liberty of inserting extracts from some of the Reviews, and making references to others, relative to such recent publications as had passed the critical ordeal. I take the liberty of repeating this practice on the present occasion, by inserting, verbatim, the only Review which has yet appeared of my *Vindication of the Rights of Britons*.— This is, I believe, peculiarly justifiable in this instance; as the work in question is intimately connected with the Lectures published in the Tribune: it having been repeated in the Lecture-Room, on the second, third, and fourth nights of the last season; and containing, in a collected point of view, an abstract of those principles which have actuated my political conduct; and which will be found diffused, in a more ample manner, through the whole of my discourses.

CRITICAL REVIEW, July 1795, p. 338.

*The Natural and Constitutional Rights of Britons to Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, and the Freedom of Popular Association: being a Vindication of the Motives and Political Conduct of John Thelwall, and of the London Corresponding Society, in general. Intended to have been delivered at the Bar of the Old Bailey, in Confutation of the late Charges of High Treason. 8vo. 2s. Symonds. 1795.*

“ Mr. Thelwall informs us, in a short advertisement, that this pamphlet contains only the least important part of that statement for which he stands pledged to the public; and which is soon to appear, under the title of a ‘Narrative of the Proceedings of Government.’ He sends this vindication into the world separately, that the investigation of the principles upon which he has acted may prepare the public to appreciate, with greater justice, the practices by which his persecutors aimed at his destruction. He asserts that he would have delivered this address on his trial, if he had not been persuaded to resign his whole cause into the hands of Messrs. Erskine and Gibbs, whose professional knowledge rendered them more adequate to the task of combating the host of crown lawyers that were embattled against him.

No. XXIV.

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“ This advice, we are of opinion, was judiciously taken. However we may approve of many parts of this vindication as a political discourse, it could not have been considered by the jury as an answer to the speeches of the crown lawyers; nor, however careless the author might have been of his life, would he have acted the part of a wise man, had he sacrificed it for the mere pleasure of delivering a severe censure on the measures of administration. At the same time we do not dispute the right he had to publish it in its present form, and think it upon the whole highly creditable to his talents as a political writer. There are many passages which might be selected for their eloquence, many for a nice and discriminating acuteness, and many for the honest warmth of innocence, and the fervor of unblushing zeal. His defence of universal suffrage we are not prepared to agree with; and there are other openings left for critical refutation: but, making allowance for a certain peculiarity of opinion, and for the circumstances of the writer, it is but justice to say that the performance is masterly, both in matter and manner.

“ The following passage will serve as a specimen of the general style and conduct of this defence, and contains a curious fact:—

‘ The man who is at liberty, can select his society; and if he trusts himself alone with a stranger of ambiguous character, or subjects himself to the misrepresentations of a perjured dependent, he must abide the consequences. But discretion is as impotent as innocence, to guard against the *inventive* malice of the being, who, armed with the warrant of a privy council, drags the victim from his home, and excluding him from all choice of society, and all guardianship of disinterested witnesses, can afterwards come forward in a court of justice, and deprive him of his life, by swearing to circumstances which, though they never occurred, are incapable of contradiction.

‘ But it is vain to cavil about particulars. If loose conversations are once admitted as evidences of treason, pretences can never be wanting to destroy the most innocent and virtuous of mankind!

‘ Yet, to the disgrace of an English court of justice—to the scandal of the British character—to the indelible reproach of that constitution, which those who have violated every principle of it, continue so extravagantly to applaud

‘plaud—at the close of the eighteenth century, in a prosecution for treason, is the feeble mass of accumulative and constructive charges bolstered by evidence of this contemptible nature.

‘For this purpose every tavern and coffee-house has been haunted, into which (rare visitant as I have been to places of that description) I may occasionally have put my head. My hours of conviviality have been attended by spies and sycophants, my doors beset with eve-droppers, my private chambers haunted by the familiar spirits of an infernal inquisition, and my confidential friends stretched on the rack of interrogatory, in order to extort from them the conversation which, in the unsuspecting hours of social hilarity, may have been uttered at my own table.

‘But it will not be believed—posterity will not credit the monstrous tale—that, unsatisfied with former arts—despairing of success, yet eager in the scent of blood, four or five days before my trial, the agents of this wicked prosecution should have sent, in the name of the privy council, for a person known to be one of my most familiar friends—known to be one of the witnesses subpoena’d on my behalf—known, also, to have been entrusted confidentially by my family, and my solicitor in the management of my defence; and after clapping a Testament to his lips, (let Mr. White or Mr. Ford contradict me, if this is false!) should interrogate him on the mode of my intended defence, on the evidence I had to contradict particular charges, and the subjects of those private conversations which, in the unsuspecting confidence of our souls, we had frequently indulged together.’ P. 78.

✍ The reader will perceive, that, with respect to *Universal Suffrage*, the Reviewers are not ready to agree with me, or admit the force of my arguments. As they have not, however, stated their objections, it is not possible for me to answer them. I shall satisfy myself, therefore, with announcing that this subject, in the course of a week or two, will be amply discussed in the Lecture-Room; and that, if I am not very much mistaken, (which in such a case is by no means improbable) every objection to a measure so consonant to justice, and equality of rights, will be answered and overthrown,—as far at least as those objections have come to my knowledge.



## THE HORRORS OF ROYAL AMBITION.

*From the BATTLE of BARNET, a Poem in the Peripatetic.**[Continued from p. 168.]*

O, frantic England! prodigal of blood!  
 What stygian fury urg'd this impious mood—  
 To rend thy entrails thus?—while foreign foes  
 With grim delight behold thy savage woes—  
 See, with proud joy, thy own victorious sword  
 Turn'd on thy breast, with wilful fury gor'd,  
 While the gaunt spectre of thy *Martial Fame*  
 Fleets, like a Ghost, a wandering empty name,  
 Self-slain, and doom'd thro' all the desert land  
 To howl her guilt, and curse her frantic hand!

So, hapless Britain! in a later age,  
 I see thy *Sword* against thy *rights* engage;  
 See thee, in mad delusion, blindly pour  
 Devoted armies on a foreign shore  
 To aid the cause of tyranny, and buy  
 Th' inglorious fetters freemen should destroy:  
 Blind to the schemes by artful statesmen plann'd!  
 And British Freedom falls on Gallia's strand:  
 Self-slain she falls, in wild, misguided zeal,  
 And German despots whet the fatal steel;  
 Then shout triumphant; to their legions call,  
 And hail the approaching hour of Britain's fall.

Nor yet content might Titled Rage appear,  
 Nor stop at Murder in her mad career:  
 In bolder Crimes their feudal Pride prevail'd:  
 Fair Faith is slain; and Heaven itself assail'd.  
 See: on the sword yet stain'd with Yorkish blood,  
 The changing hero, in indignant mood,  
 Allegiance swears to York's expiring cause,  
 And back to life the sinking faction draws:  
 While he who late, the *white rose* on his crest,  
 Gor'd struggling Lancaster's aspiring breast,  
 Now stops the blood; recalls the fleeting breath;  
 And vows to York's proud race dismay and death.

Now, front to front, in threatening wrath, behold  
 Those painted targets and those helms of gold,  
 Erewhile whose proud devices, side by side,  
 Throng'd the same field, in amity allied;  
 And he who late o'er some half-vanquish'd friend  
 Rush'd, the firm shield's protection to extend,

Now

Now barb'd with vengeance wings the thirsty dart,  
Or bathes his falchion in the suppliant's heart.

No link of friendship binds ; no kindred tie ;  
And oaths in vain their feeble aid supply :  
Nor pious awe, nor bond of Faith controls ;  
(Limbs cas'd in steel, and adamantinè souls !)  
Again they change, their broken leagues restore,  
And seal new perjuries in new streams of gore.  
Their ready slaves with blind obedience turn ;  
Change as they change, and as they dictate burn :  
In either cause with equal zeal destroy ;  
Pleas'd if their Lords the savage Fame enjoy.

Chief of these noble locusts in its rage  
Sent by offended Heaven to scourge the age,  
Stern Warwick, proud in brutal might, appears  
Hemm'd round with slaughters, devastations, fears.  
His raging breath, omnipotent in ill !  
Is drawn to stifle, and but flows to kill :  
Tyrants to tyrants in succession rise :—  
His voice creates them ; and his frown destroys.

Behold him now the cause of Edward own,  
And lift the gaudy pageant to the throne ;  
That so the boy (whose vices speak his birth)  
Sprung from the *Imperial Spoilers of the Earth !*  
With England's treasures, and with England's dames  
May soothe his follies, and indulge his flames.—  
O'erwearied Toils, extorted produce waste  
In scenes of riot, and lascivious taste ;  
Tear from the aged Matron's widow'd side  
(Widow'd perhaps to prop his regal pride !)  
The virgin treasure of her daughter's charms,  
To lie polluted in her daughter's arms ;—  
Or doom the husband, in the bloom of youth,  
To mourn the pangs of unrewarded truth ;  
With guiltless shame his branded forehead hide,  
And mourn in widow'd sheets a living bride :  
While the proud tyrant, whom his wealth sustains,  
Feasts on his wealth, and riots in his pains.  
But scenes like these the *milder* woes display  
That mark the ravages of kingly sway :  
And panting Britain, mark'd with slaughter's ring toils,  
Amid these humbler crimes indulgent smiles :—  
Pleas'd the short ray of transient Peace to gain,  
O'erlooks the *princely* vices in her train,  
And deems it bliss nought heavier to support  
Than the *lewd pastimes* of a wasteful court.

But,



But, lo! in tears another Helen came;  
 With tears of oil to feed the dying flame,  
 Renew the wasting fires of Civil Rage,  
 And give to Slaughter's reign another age.  
 The British Paris feasts his wanton soul  
 (For what are Kings, if Reason must control!)  
 Fearless of injured Nevil's dangerous ire,  
 Hail's the fair sovereign of an hour's desire;  
 And Civil Discord lights the Nuptial Fire.

Stern Warwick heard, as from the Gallic shore  
 His prosperous sail the plighted princess bore.  
 He heard: and like a thunderbolt he came,  
 That strikes some reverend Abbey's Gothic frame,  
 And while convulsive Nature rocks around  
 Lays it a smoking ruin on the ground.  
 (Its stately fenes, its pageant trophies torn,  
 And all that distant ages vainly mourn.)  
 While prostrate crowds that worship in the quire,  
 Crush'd in the hideous shock, with unheard groans  
 expire.

Behold, again, from Power's polluted seat,  
 The vain, ungrateful libertine retreat;  
 While monkish Henry, with his haughty queen,  
 (Wanton her heart, and insolent her mein!)  
 'This call'd from exile, that the dungeon's gloom,  
 Again the sickle diadem assume,  
 And his stern power with grateful transport hail,  
 Who turn'd so oft their sanguine faction pale.

Poor groaning land, whom equal ills betray  
 Beneath an idiot's or a tyrant's sway!  
 Thy people slaves; a proud, but powerless throne,  
 Propp'd by the nobles' force, and not its own;  
 Those nobles, lost, as all vain nobles are  
 To every liberal patriotic care!

Honour the exclusive name with which they grace  
 The pompous vices of their selfish race!  
 Scorning the crowd upon whose necks they ride!  
 Dead to each sense, but lust and giddy pride!  
 For them in war our wealth—our blood we show'r,—  
 And what War spares, their Luxuries devour!  
 Their gaudy crimes how long shall Britain brook,  
 Ere her bold offspring snap the galling Yoke?

Their swords again the factious Barons draw—  
 "Swords and strong arms their conscience and their  
 law!"

For faithless Edward still a host attends,  
 Whose interests, or whose passions are his friends:

Here,

Here, to this spot—whose guilty turf appears  
 Manur'd with blood, and wet with orphans' tears;  
 And still where hovering ghosts with boding strain,  
 To Fancy's ear of cruel Fate complain,  
 That urg'd them, for Ambition's ruthless strife,  
 To slight each fond regard of social life;  
 To leave unpropp'd a parent's hoary age,  
 In some proud chieftain's quarrel to engage;  
 For midnight marches and the din of arms,  
 To fly the virgin's yet untasted charms;  
 Or leave the widow o'er her babe to mourn,  
 And weep for joys that never must return!  
 While they (what furies human bosoms tear!)  
 Bled for the chains the rising race should wear.—  
 —Here, to the spot, the rising squadrons throng,  
 While kindred hate drives each fierce host along,  
 And banner'd omens, gleaming through the air,  
 The direful issue of the day declare.  
 Two raging dog-stars, scattering plagues and death,  
 Flame in their van, and scorch the blasted heath;  
 This, darting far, its corruscations sends,  
 And all around destroys—or foes, or friends  
 With like contagion strikes the random fire,  
 Till all extinct the fatal flame expire:  
 While that, still raging with insatiate blaze,  
 Pours, in collected wrath, its blasting rays;  
 Shakes o'er the foe its red destroying hair,  
 That sheds infectious horror and despair;  
 Exhaustless flames with pestilential ire,  
 And floods the ensanguin'd field with one wide-wast-  
 ing fire.

Such the dire omens through the lowering sky,  
 That o'er the hostile legions wave on high:  
 For thus, while Death shrieks out the hideous yell,  
 And hovering furies chaunt the direful spell,  
 Grim o'er their looms the fatal sisters weave,  
 And fiends of Havock the dire webs receive;  
 Then haste, and, shrieking, with portentous glare,  
 O'er their stern ranks the threat'ning signals bear;  
 Sound the loud blast; the general carnage hail:  
 And wait the incense of the tainted gale.  
 Too soon, alas! that tainted gale shall rise,  
 Blot the griev'd air, and blot the weeping skies!  
 For, lo! they meet; wounds answering wounds they deal,  
 Strain the tough Yew, and drench the murd'rous steel:  
 Thro' kindred bands the mace--the falchion hew,  
 Loud strokes resound, and dying groans pursue;

Stones,



Stones, spears, and darts in slaughtering tempests rain,  
 And helms and hauberks sheath the ranks in vain,—  
 Heralds in vain the trophied targe supply,  
 Cleft shields and broken lances useless lie,  
 While roll promiscuous o'er the trampled plain,  
 Steeds, arms, and men—the dying and the slain.  
 The martial Spirit of Britannia's Isles—  
 (Whose brandish'd lightnings aid the *patriot* toils—  
 Whose steady hand, when Truth contends with Might,  
 Uplifts the balance of eternal right :  
 And, when in awful panoply array'd,  
 Indignant Freedom claims her guardian aid,  
 Descends in terrors to the warrior maid :  
 With Heaven's own thunders aids the sacred cause,  
 And proud ambition's tyrant bosom awes !)—  
 Shock'd with a scene where *Violence* and *Pride*  
 And *Perjur'd Guilt* alone for empire vied,  
 In darker folds her sea-green mantle spread,  
 And veil'd the beaming glories of her head ;  
 Call'd from the impious scene her bands away,  
 And left to warring fiends the doubtful day :  
 (As though to scourge the factious race inclin'd,  
 And leave a dread memorial to mankind !)  
 The warrior cherubim her call obey ;  
 Their flaming falchions sheathe, their wings display,  
 And seek the realms of empyrean day :  
 Yet, lingering, oft, with backward glance, deplore  
 The long-protected haunts of Albion's rocky shore.  
 With clouded radiance, and abated fires,  
 Westward meanwhile the sickening sun retires ;  
 Involves his brow to shun the slaughtering light,  
 And Night and Chaos threat the closing fight—  
 When now blind Chance, not Justice lifts the scales ;  
 And Edward's fortune in the strife prevails ;  
 For Warwick, bent with one decisive blow  
 To strike deep terror in the yielding foe,  
 Calls his choice band, who yet inactive lay  
 To watch the changing fortunes of the day)  
 With sudden aid his phalanx to sustain,  
 Inspire the drooping, and replace the slain ;  
 When, lo ! the banners flaming in the rear,  
 And shouts loud echoing in the startled ear,  
 (Thro' clouds of dust while doubtful meteors gleam)  
 To the gall'd ranks a hostile ambush seem :

[To be continued.]

## THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XXV.

*Report on the STATE OF POPULAR OPINION, and the Causes of the rapid Diffusion of DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. Part the Second. Including Definitions of Democracy, Aristocracy, and Monarchy.---Original Meaning of the word KING ---Consequences of MINISTERIAL AMBITION, &c. Delivered at the Lecture Room, Beaufort Buildings, September 9th, 1795.*

CITIZENS,

THE last Lecture that I delivered in this place was the commencement, or rather indeed the continuation of a report of the state of popular opinion. I endeavoured to state, as far as my means would enable me, (and candidly to shew you what my means have been), the progress of popular opinion, since I had the honor of meeting this company; and I concluded with observing, and giving you, such reasons as appeared to me necessary to shew that there was a considerable increase of the democratic principle in this country. I proposed then, on a future evening, to enter into the causes of this increase, and to endeavour to point out the particular conduct of government to which we are indebted for this increase.

But, before I enter into the particular causes, it is necessary that I should give some explanation of my terms; because words of almost every description, are considerably abused in disputes between contending parties; those, to which I allude, in particular. It frequently happens, that appellations, of the highest virtue and excellence, are used by the enemies of liberty, as terms of the most contemptuous reproach.

When we consider the use of the word Democracy, we find that there are two interpretations to be given to it.—The Aristocrats are very fond of fixing an interpretation to it, which the word never did,—nor ever can, bear in this or any other language.

There are, however, two distinct senses, in which an Englishman may naturally be expected to use this word. If we look back to the real meaning of the term, we shall find it to be a government by the great body of the people.

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Now, a government by the great body of the people, taken in its strict and original sense, does certainly describe a *pure republic*. Nay, more, it describes a republic without any *intermediate* order, such as we now call a representative assembly. But this is a system whose advocates, in the present day, if any, are extremely few; for the improvement of political science has enabled us to discover very considerable defects in all the ancient forms of government: and it has been found that a democracy, purely and simply considered, can never exist, save, only, in a small country, consisting, perhaps, of a single city and a few miles of territory around it: Nor even in such a state, can this species of government exist long, without occasional tumult and disorder. Modern legislators, therefore, have invented what is called a representative democracy; which is, in reality, if you adhere to the strict definition of terms, no democracy at all; because, if the representatives are vested with the complete and full powers of the state, I think I shall be able to state to you, that this is the only thing which really, justly and properly, can be called an *aristocracy*.

Aristocracy, in fact, originally meant a government of the *wisest*: and who can have so great a right to be deemed the wisest, as those who, for their wisdom and supposed integrity, have been selected, by the great mass of mankind, to be their rulers and governors. This representative democracy is the real essence of what was formerly, theoretically, called aristocracy;—the realization of the visions of sublime philosophers, who, in their attempt to discover how an aristocratic government ought to be constituted, were never able to hit upon this project. They foresaw, indeed, as every one would, that a country ought to be governed by the wisest; and were, therefore, anxious to establish a government of the wisest; *Plato* in particular, considered an aristocracy—as the best government in the world.

But how was this wisdom to be discovered? Why, forsooth, a few philosophers, among the musty cobwebs that hung about their cells, were to dictate, by a sort of divine right, to the rest of the world, and, like the priests of the deluded multitude, were to triumph by a sort of superstition, of which they, themselves, were the authors, and from which they, alone, could be expected to receive any advantage.

Having

Having given these two definitions of democracy, I think I shall be enabled to prove that every Englishman ought, in reality, to be, in a certain sense of the word, a *democrat*. I think I shall prove to you, that, what I shall call *constitutional democracy*, ought to animate every breast; ought to glow in every bosom; ought to dictate to every intellect; and that it is only by cherishing this glorious constitutional democracy—this emanation arising from the *principles*, not from the *corrupt practice*, of our constitution—that we can ever expect to relieve ourselves from the burden of immoderate taxation, and to attain the peaceful and quiet enjoyment of the fruits of our talents and industry.

Let me then, Citizens, put to your consideration this question:

### WHAT IS THE CONSTITUTION OF BRITAIN?

If we consider the external forms of our government, we shall find that it consists of a Chief Magistrate and a Senate of two chambers—the one elective, and the other hereditary. If we consider the description of this government which the spirit of our constitution has dictated, we shall find it to consist of *King, Lords, and Commons in parliament assembled*.

Now, Citizens, to substantiate the assertion I have made, that *every true lover of the British Constitution ought to be at heart a Democrat*, it is only necessary to consider the meaning of the plain, simple word—*Commons*.

I should suppose, Citizens,—notwithstanding the variety of abusive epithets that have been invented to obscure the real meaning of this phrase, (such as *wretches, rabble, swinish multitude*, and the like)—that it is still impossible for any individual to be so dull, as not to know what the word *Commons* means. There is no man, not even *Mr. Burke*, himself, in the very paroxysm of his frenzy, who can mistake a human being for a *swine*. No man can be so ignorant of the English language, as to suppose that the word *wretch* is a description of a class, or order of beings. There are *wretches* enough, indeed, in this country; and woe to the wickedness of that aristocracy, which has made them so wretched! There are miserable beings, indeed; but it ill becomes those, who have plunged us into this misery—this swinish ignorance, to reproach us with *their* crimes, and to think that their present usurpations are a justification for usurpations still more abominable and atrocious.



cious, The fact is, that the word, *Commons*, carries its own meaning with it. Every body, when you talk of the *king*, as one of the constituent parts of our government, knows very well, that you mean the chief magistrate of the country, invested with certain powers and authorities, by the constitution, for the benefit of the people.—Yes, for the benefit of the people. This is the express condition of his power: and the chief justice *Eyre*, himself (who did not seem very anxious to make acknowledgments to the friends of liberty) was obliged to declare in the outset of his speech, that it was only for the protection, advantage and happiness of the people, that the laws of the country had raised particular fences around the person of the king, and attempted to make him inviolable from the attacks of common incendiaries, or individual violence, which revenge might dictate, or ambition lead to. The *king*, then, is the chief magistrate,—the executive power; and he, our constitution tells us, is one, and *only one*, branch of the constituted authority. By the *Lords* we very well know what is meant; though it would be difficult to find what is the meaning of some persons being made lords, who have got that title. It is, however, very well known that, by *Lords* we mean a certain number of individuals walking, like other men, upon two legs; but, unlike other men, decorated with stars and garters, and such other ornaments, as you might have seen represented in gingerbread, a few days ago, at Bartholemew Fair. They are called *Peers*, that is, the *companions, equals and counsellors of the King*; for such is I believe the original meaning of the word, and the constitutional sense in which it is to be taken; because every peer of the realm has a right to demand, whenever he chuses, an audience of the king, and has a right to give him his counsel and advice:—leaving it to his *wisdom* whether that advice shall be followed or not.

Thus, then, having found out that king means the only person we call king in the country, and *Lords* the whole of the persons called *Lords* in the country, I shall conclude, that *Commons* means all those persons who do not presume to be considered as either kings or lords, or any thing else than mere common people.

It is true, there are some amphibious animals who are in one sense *Commons*, but who are called *Lords* by courtesy; and Mr. *Windham* and Mr. *Burke*, by their metaphysics, might prove, perhaps, that there are *uncommon* men who  
may

may be called *commons* by courtesy, also. But if they possess the capacity, the shape, and other attributes common to mankind, I conclude that they are entitled, at least, to be considered as *common men*; and, consequently, that by "Commons in parliament assembled" we mean the democracy of the country, who by their representatives are (ought to be I mean) represented in the commons house of parliament.

Thus, then, Citizens, the constitution of Great Britain may be properly defined a *democracy*, admitting some mixture of aristocracy in its legislature, and adopting an hereditary Chief Magistrate, to be responsible for the execution of the laws, and who is called the *King*.

Citizens, Modern theorists—for modern theorists we have had in abundance, who have been very anxious, by general denunciations against modern theories, to abuse themselves; Mr. *Burke*, Mr. *Windham*, Mr. *Wilde*, and some other champions of the fallen cause of chivalry, are a little confounded at the old constitutional language which lawyers of two or three hundred years ago were accustomed to use. They do not like to hear of the British Commonwealth: for commonwealth and republic are they know synonymous; and, therefore, they have hunted for new theories and new coined phrases, and have chosen to use a very curious phrase, *mixed monarchy*.

Now, if these gentlemen, instead of studying metaphysics, had chosen to study their dictionaries a little, they would not have made use of so nonsensical a phrase. Monarchy means a government in which the supreme power and authority are vested in *one person*. How that can be, and yet, Lords and Commons have a right to share that power and authority with him, is a paradox that will require all the subtlety of these metaphysicians to explain.

The fact then is, that, instead of talking of a *mixed monarchy*, we ought to call our government a *limited* or *restrained democracy*; the theory and the maxims of our government teaching us, that it is for the sake of the democracy (that is the great body of the people) that all our laws and institutions are made; and that all constituted functionaries are, in reality, as they always must be in practice, whenever practice is called for, subordinate to the grand object, the welfare of that great *body from whom all power is derived, and for whom all power ought to be exercised*.

How,



How, then, came this government to be called a *mixed monarchy*?—or how can a monarchy be *mixed*? Lately, indeed, they seem disposed to get rid of the *mixture*, and the chief justice *Eyre*, in plain and direct terms, calls the government of this country a *monarchy*. “To pull down and subvert that glorious fabric the British Monarchy,” are his plain and unqualified words. Let me ask this learned lawyer, *Who made it a monarchy*? Not the ancestors he talks of. They made it not a monarchy;—a *despotic government of one*. They vested, indeed, in the hands of one man the executive power; but the real sovereignty, the right of making and altering the laws, they vested—or, if their language be supposed an image of their hearts, they meant to vest, in the great body of the people, by their representatives by them chosen: imagining, that their councils would be rendered the more wise, by having a house, filled with men well educated and of superior knowledge, which they called a *House of Peers*. But little did they foresee, that in some future period—not at the close of the 18th Century; it will undoubtedly be the 19th before it takes place.—Little did they foresee that, in some future period, boxing and brutality were to be the qualifications of the ermine robe: and that pimps and parasites were to be decorated with those ornaments, which, if they are to be worn at all, ought to be the badges of honor, virtue and actual service.

But these learned men, happening to understand more of *languages* than *principles*, and being able by the use of these languages, to confound together the words *King*, *Rex* and *Monarch*, therefore, endeavoured to make you believe that a *kingdom*, a *government by a Rex*, and a *monarchy* are one and the same thing.

But let us enquire the meaning of the word *King*; and we shall find it to be of a very different signification from the words *rex* and *monarch*; as a learned etymologist informs me—for I profess myself to be but a plain man, and neither etymologist nor scholar. I want to discover the truth; and a truth of six minutes old is as much revered by me, as a truth that has the stamp of 6000 years. Words and derivations, therefore, have little to do in deciding my principles. I will use, however, when I can, the knowledge of others to any good purpose. *King*, then, is an old Saxon word, or rather a contraction of an old Saxon word. It is derived from the word *konning*, which was sometimes pronounced

pronounced kenning, and sometimes cunning—and from cunning or kenning—*ken* and *King*.

Thus, then, in reality, *King* means the *cunning man*.

You will please to remember, however, Citizens, that I do not mean to “call the KING a SOLOMON” again. I have been once tried for High Treason for calling the king a Solomon already. Mr. Groves, you know, alias Mr. Powell, after saying that I spoke in the most contemptuous and reproachful terms of his most sacred Majesty, when he was asked by the judge what he meant by contemptuous and reproachful terms, said he had “heard me call the “*King a Solomon!*” You have heard the old proverb, that the burnt child dreads the fire. I am determined, therefore, never to call the King a Solomon again; being very well convinced that it is as high treason to call the King a Solomon, as it would be a high absurdity to call any of his ministers by that name.

However, Citizens, to be a little more grave, the plain and simple fact is, that Kings, according to our *ancient Saxon constitution*, and according to the original meaning of the word, were persons of eminence, *chosen* to fill the office of first magistrate, on account of their superior wisdom—real or supposed. I say *chosen*: for notwithstanding the boasts made by the supporters of divine right of lineal descent from the God *Woden*, or the devil knows what other gods, or godlings I will venture to affirm that, legally speaking, *the crown of this country never was hereditary, till the revolution in 1688; and that at this very time it is only hereditary, under certain restrictions*: that is to say, upon condition of a strict compliance, on the part of the *House of Brunswick*, with the compact and terms under which the crown was granted.

Citizens, It is very true that our Saxon ancestors had a notion (so ancient, and consequently, so venerable is prejudice!) that wisdom is confined to particular families; and, therefore, they always chose their *King* or their *cunning man* from one particular family; but that they did chuse him, is evident to every one who has read the history of his country. They did not always take the elder son, in preference to the younger. An infant or idiot was never suffered to reign upon the throne; and, if they had the misfortune to be mistaken in their first choice, they repaired the evil by setting him aside, and putting up another.

This



This was the practice of our Saxon ancestors; and I defy any historian to contradict the assertion, and bring facts of history to support his contradiction.

What was the practice also, after the invasion by that band of plunderers called Norman conquerors? How did they succeed?

Did the bastard of a woman-servant at an inn succeed to the throne of Great Britain by the divine right of lineal descent? Certainly not: he seized the throne by power; and conscious, even in that barbarous age, that power was not principle, and that possession is but an unquiet state without some semblance, at least, of right he assembled the states of the country, and procured himself to be formally elected: upon certain conditions it is true, with which he did not afterwards conceive that the *faith of regular government* obliged him to comply.

After his death, did his crown descend to his eldest son? No, with the consent of the states of the kingdom he bequeathed his crown to his second son. That second son was succeeded by his third, in violation of what is now foolishly called the *right of primogeniture*. And in fact, if you trace the whole line of kings, from the time of the Norman invasion to the period of the revolution, in 1688, you will find *that there never were more than three persons of the same family, who, from father to son, took the crown in regular descent, and held it during the period of their natural lives*. Some circumstance or other (sometimes real election, sometimes pretended election, and sometimes usurpation and violence, under colour of election) deposed one and set another upon the throne. Nay, to take no notice of Henry VII. who could claim no sort of descent from any family whatever; being a bastard—and of course, according to the *perfection of wisdom*, as revealed in the orthodox code of our law, being no sort of relation either to his father or his mother.—Setting him aside, we find Henry VIII. (convinced of this truth which I am now enforcing) occasionally consulting his parliament (HE also had a tolerably obsequious parliament!) to get them to settle the descent of the crown on the head of one or other of his children just as his caprice happened to dictate or his passions prompt.

Thus I think my position is proved; and I could enter into a longer detail if it were necessary, which it is not,  
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as every individual can satisfy himself by referring to history, that *till the revolution of 1688, there was no such thing as a legally established hereditary succession to the crown of this country.*

For what then was the revolution in 1688 made?—Every man who pretends to be an admirer of the constitution of this country, as then established, must acknowledge that it was made, not for the purpose of enslaving, but of further emancipating the people. Well, then, what is the reasoning that results from this? Our revolutionary ancestors had found that certain inconveniences, and very great ones too, resulted from this species of elective succession. They perceived, and rightly, that a crown, such as it has always been held, is much too great a temptation for ambition, much too important an object to be made subject to what is called election; but what, under circumstances of such strong temptation, must conduct to, or found itself upon, civil war, rebellion, or intestine commotion. But citizens, though they established an hereditary throne, under certain restrictions, which it is not now necessary for me to dwell upon, they certainly did not mean to abandon the *Democracy*. This part of the constitution they proposed to leave entire.

I believe, if they had thought a little more deeply, they would have found that the only way to keep it entire was to introduce an immediate reformation into it: to destroy the subterfuges of corruption, by means of which that representation may be so debilitated as to be rendered a mere nullity—a phantom—or, to speak more properly, a fiend-like instrument of oppression, veiled in the angelic semblance of Liberty. To prevent this, they would, I believe, if their attention had been sufficiently directed to this object, have restored the people to their natural and unalienable right (confirmed by the spirit of their constitution,) the right of *annual parliaments and universal suffrage*.

Well then, citizens, if it be true, that originally the democracy was the basis and foundation of the British constitution; if it be true that the revolution in 1688, was not made for the purpose of weakening liberty, but for the purpose of strengthening it, I have a right to conclude, that democracy is of right, the basis of our government; and that *we ought to consider the government of this country, as a representative democracy, admitting at the same*



*time, the check and controul of an hereditary aristocracy, called a House of Lords, and vesting the executive government in a person whom we call, not a MONARCH, but a KING.*

This then is a sense in which the word democracy is not only justifiable, but proper; and to vindicate the democracy is equally legal, equally constitutional, as it is consistent with the fundamental principles of justice and of reason.

In this sense, and in this only, I beg the audience will understand me, when I recommend the purification and support of the democracy of this country, and a zealous attachment to the principles of that democracy.

But, Citizens, it has been observed by Hume, and he brings a great number of facts to support this part of his observation, that the government of this country, which for a long while before had been running strongly towards a *sort of democracy*, had, when he wrote, that is to say, fifty years ago, for a considerable time been setting very strongly in towards *absolute monarchy*: and this man, who calls himself a Briton, has the degeneracy of mind to declare, that absolute monarchy is not only the natural tendency of the government of Britain, but the desirable end to which the constitution ought to arrive.

But while theorists of one description are talking of promoting the power of the crown, and increasing the monarchic authority; and while theorists of another description are talking of supporting the dignity of the democracy, by vesting larger powers in the House of Commons, the plain and simple fact is, that *the government of this country, practically speaking, is no longer either a democracy, or a monarchy, nor a mixture of monarchy and democracy; but a usurped oligarchy, constituted by a set of borough-mongers, who have stolen at once the liberties of the people, and abused the prerogatives of the crown.*

To these men every species of reformation, every species of discussion, seems equally abhorrent and frightful. To them, the democracy which I described in the first instance, and the constitutional democracy which I described in the second, were equally dreadful. Every thing that should have a tendency to give any sway or influence to reason, or to throw any authority into the hands of the people, appeared so formidable, that they looked with equal malevolence and hatred upon the most moderate reformer and the most violent revolutionist.

This was evident from the commencement of the revolution in France:—a revolution which, I will be bold to say, till it was disturbed by the intrigues of foreign despots—till it was counteracted

counteracted by the machinations of *Pitt* and his coadjutors, conducted upon principles so philosophical, with a humanity so astonishing, and with a benevolence so enlivening, that it has almost lifted one's ideas of the human species beyond the ordinary level upon which we have been used to contemplate them, and painted to us that regenerated country as a nation of philosophers indeed!—or rather of a guardian genii dropped from the skies, to restore peace, wisdom, and happiness, to every quarter of the globe. Oligarchic usurpers dreaded, however, the appearances of such a revolution: they dreaded it more than they would have dreaded even the sanguinary proceedings which, by their artifices, have since taken place, and upon which they have openly boasted their hopes of a renovation of that system, which would be friendly to the continuation of the orderly regular governments of tyranny and corruption, among the nations of the continent, and to the system of rotten boroughs, by which the people of this country have been so long oppressed, taxed, and insulted.

Men who dread the truth, and who have a cause to support, whose most characteristic attribute is a rottenness at the very core, always attempt to calumniate those who enter into discussion. And I remember a couple of little anecdotes of this kind, which perhaps will form some degree of parallel to the ravings of Mr. *Burke* and his followers. The former of these is from an "Essay on Demoniac Possessions," printed in a recent volume of the "Transactions of the Manchester Society," in which there is a quotation from an old book, written by a pious divine of the church of England, one of those inspired gentlemen, whose holiness may be discovered by their lawn sleeves, and who are vulgarly called Bishops. This venerable and right reverend book was written to prove the existence of *witches ghosts*, and *hobgoblins*; and the holy man who wrote it ventures to say, that, if you begin once to doubt the existence of witches, ghosts and hobgoblins, farewell to all hopes of the salvation of your wicked soul: for "as it is a well-known maxim, that they who are for no Bishops are for no King; so it is equally well known, that they who are not believers in ghosts and witches, cannot be believers in God."—The other anecdote has come to me only in a traditionary way: you must not therefore expect chapter and verse. But I am told that one Mr. Toplady, in one of his sublime and terrible orations, laid down a maxim equally clear and demonstrative of the damning dangers of investigation,



and the consequent necessity of making a wide gulp, and swallowing down the whole of the established creed at once, without any chewing. According to him, if once you begin to waver and enquire, you are lost; and the steps to perdition are these: from *Calvinism* you go to *Arminianism*, from *Arminianism* to *Arianism*, from *Arianism* to *Socinianism*, from *Socinianism* to *Deism*, from *Deism* to *Atheism* and from *Atheism* to the Devil.

In the same way argues that mirror of *political orthodoxy* Mr. *Burke*—for intolerance, religious or political, is the same in principle; and must consequently appeal to the same mode of reasoning. If these enquiries, says he, in essence, at least, if not in words—if these enquiries are permitted to go on in the world—if political reformations are tolerated by the regular governments of Europe, from overthrowing the despotism of France, they will begin to reform the corruptions of *rotten boroughs* in Britain:—from reforming the corruptions of *rotten boroughs*, they will attack *places and pensions*; and from attacking *places and pensions*, they will proceed to grumble at *enormous taxes*;—from grumbling at enormous taxes, they will attack the *enchanted castle* of the *British Constitution* itself, overthrow the venerable remains of feudal necromancy, break down the magic tripos of *ancestral inspiration*; and hurl the *great magician* from his chair; throw all things into anarchy, and thence fall headlong into political perdition.

In the pious hope therefore of saving us from this calamitous fall, he wrote the most raving and fantastical, sublime and scurrilous, paltry and magnificent, and every way most astonishing book ever sent into the world. A book, I will venture to say, which has made more democrats, among the thinking part of mankind, than all the works ever written in answer to it; or all the labours of those, who according to the cant phrases, and nonsensical jargon of our minister and his agents, *organise* anarchy and *establish* confusion, in every corner of the world.

Yes, I will venture to say, that it is impossible for any thinking man, really meditating upon the consequences of the facts and principles which every now and then escape from the pen of this Burke, even in this very publication, and marking the shallow pretences upon which his

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favorite doctrines are built—it is impossible for any man, be his prejudice ever so strong, to read that book without being convinced, that Mr. Burke is entirely in the wrong; and that the truth lies on the side which he is so eager to calumniate.—I confess for my own part, that this was the impression the book made upon me. I had like many others, been educated in the high veneration of certain high-sounding words, and could not think that any thing could possibly be wrong in so *glorious and happy a constitution* as that enjoyed by *this most favoured corner of the world*, where felicity blossoms like the primrose under every hedge, and happiness towers like the lofty oak in every forest. But when I came to read Burke's book (and I had a professional reason for reading it with very serious attention) I was astonished to hear the man talk of the revolution in 1688, as of an act by which the privileges and liberties of the people were taken away! as an act by which our ancestors relinquished for ever a natural and imprescriptible right, to which formerly he seems to admit we might have laid some claim.

When I found him laying down theories so contradictory to sense and history; and when I found him in order to throw unmerited calumny on the friends of liberty, representing a woman whose monstrous vices would have rendered her an object of disgust, but for the particular situation in which the accident of birth had placed her, as a star descending from heaven upon the earth, to warm, illuminate, and cheer mankind—when I found him laying down principles which destroy his own conclusions, and asserting facts which destroy his own principles—when I found him, in the same breath denying the right of a people whom he calls free, to judge of the conduct of their rulers, and rejecting with disdain the supposition that such rulers ought to consult the feelings and stand in awe of the opinions of the people, and yet contending that it was impossible for the members of the constituent assembly of France, to effect their purpose of giving freedom to France, because “To secure any degree of sobriety in the propositions made by the leaders in any public assembly, *they ought to respect in some degree, perhaps to fear, those whom they conduct*:—“To be led any otherwise than blindly, the followers must be qualified, if not for actors, at least for judges;”  
that



that is say, the people must either be driven like wild beasts, or else they must be enabled to judge for themselves; and how are they to be enabled to judge, but by that very diffusion of information, the very mention of extending which to the *Swiss Multitude*, throws Mr. Burke into such paroxysms of frenzy!—"To be led otherwise than blindly," says he, "the followers must be qualified, if not for actors, at least for judges; they must be judges also of *natural weight and authority*;"—not the factious authority of tyranny and wealth—but "**NATURAL WEIGHT AND AUTHORITY!!!**"—

When I found in this farago, every part of which, that is not founded in gross falsehood and misrepresentation, militates in principle against his own conclusions, nothing (to speak in Johnsonian phraseology) but the *frenzies of sublimity, the contradictions of reason, and the tortuosities of sophistication*, could I avoid suspecting, that there was "something rotten in the State of Denmark," which this State Juggler wanted to conceal from view; and that there was in reality something so excellent in the principles espoused by the *French Revolutionists*, that it was impossible for a man even to write against them without promoting them? The fact is, that nothing can be fatal to truth but silence (or commotion). Do but write or speak, no matter how absurd the principles you set out upon, and it must triumph. Nay, perhaps the best way to promote it, in an enquiring age, is to write away against it as fast as you possibly can.

The writing of this book was certainly one of the first active causes of the growth of democracy in this country. Discussion was no doubt considerably promoted by the immortal writings of *Thomas Paine*, *Joel Barlow*, *Thomas Cooper* of Manchester, *James Mackintosh*, and many other enlightened men, who took up the pen to vindicate the revolution of France: little imagining that because *they* had thus vindicated the French revolution, persons in this country, some of whom had never read their books, were to be tried for high treason for that which they had written.

But However these books assisted, and undoubtedly they did very considerably assist the progress of the cause of Democracy, it is to be observed, that they owed their existence to the publication of *Burke*; and therefore

we are to look upon him as the great father and first propagator of the principles of democracy in this country.

But mark the step that followed!—It was thought that the reading of these answers would be a very pernicious thing indeed. It was never attempted to prevent persons from reading the book itself: for you know there is no harm in reading or inquiring upon on side of the question—but to attempt to examine both—O 'tis most horrible! and on 'the opposition side, all *regular governments* will agree that the press ought to be shackled, as much as possible. Shackled, therefore, it was resolved it should be; and the *Diabolus Regis* (as in ancient times the king's Attorney General was called)—the *Diabolus Regis*, that is the *King's Devil* was instructed to launch forth the subterranean thunders of his legal Pandemonium. Proclamations were immediately issued to forbid the people to read or think but the devil was in the people (not the *King's Devil*, but *Tom Paine's Devil*, or a devil of some other description) and the more they were forbidden to read or think, they did but think and read the more. These proclamations instead of preventing their career of enquiry, made them enquire with more avidity, and judge with greater profundity: and I understand it was very common, on market days, in little country towns, for the country, people who had never heard of *Paine's* name before, to go to the little book-shops, and, not knowing any other way to ask for it, to make themselves understood by saying, "Why Maister, we want that there book we "maunt read." Thus were proclamations against Democrats, a second effective cause of promoting the principles of democracy.

Proclamations not succeeding, the next thing was to proceed to prosecutions: accordingly we find, that men have been prosecuted by wholesale, some for *writing* books, others for having published them, and others for having read them. For my part, my case was a little singular; for I was prosecuted, and that to the jeopardy of my life, *for not having read them.* *Joel Barlow's* book, in particular, which was one of the things from which large extracts were read upon my Trial, I had never seen till after my acquittal. Since, indeed, I have read and admired it very much: for I thought it necessary, as I had been in danger of being hanged for it, that I should know what it contained.

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That excellent and worthy citizen, *Frend*, was also to be persecuted in the university of which he was so ornamental a member, for having written a book professedly with a view of reconciling the contending parties, and preventing the excesses which he and every man foresaw that the mad extravagances of the minister were plunging us into. *Winterbottom* for preaching sermons in which nobody can discover what were the passages that were called seditious, was thrown into Newgate, where he is to lie four years; and *Holt*, the printer of the *Newark Herald*, while the *Duke of Richmond* and *Mr. Pitt* are the principal members of the cabinet of this country, is actually prosecuted, condemned, and imprisoned, for re-publishing the letter, which the *Duke of Richmond*, *Mr. Pitt's* patriotic coadjutor so industriously disseminated throughout the country, as containing the best and only means of restoring our constitution to its ancient vigor and purity.

But it was not enough to prosecute men for books. Perjured spies, men known to be inflamed with the utmost rancour and hatred against the parties, were permitted to swear in courts of justice, from their loose recollections of conversation still more loose and unpremeditated; and, upon such evidence, men were condemned for indiscrete and idle words: words which, not being deliberately spoken, ought to be considered, as all hasty and unpremeditated words must be in the view of candour and reason, as perfectly innocent.

*Breillat* was condemned for expressions of this kind, alleged by his prosecutors to have been uttered almost a year before the time of his prosecution. In the hour of inebriation, in a coffee-house, the master of which gave the information, poor *Hogson* was taken into custody, crammed in a vile dungeon; and now forsooth lies in jail, for laughing over a bargain, which no good man will approve;—made between the *Prince of Hesse Cassel* and the *Electors of Hanover*, respecting the sale of their subjects at £30 per man; and having therefore called his most sacred and august majesty “A Hog-butcher!” What is majesty if it can be wounded by a nick-name?—And who ever heard of any prosecution commenced against that most infamous slanderer *Edmund Burke*, for calumniating the still more sacred and august majesty of the people by calling them a *Swinish Multitude*? Yet for this foolish piece of levity and buffoonery

buffoonery, (while the spectacled buffoon of St. Steven's is yet at large) is poor *Hodgson*, forsooth, also, confined in Newgate, with a fine upon his back, in violation of the constitution of the country, Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights, which expressly say that no judge shall, at his peril lay unconscionable fines upon any man, which must weigh him down for ever. There he lies loaded with an enormous fine, evidently for the express purpose of keeping him a prisoner for life: because those who imposed the fine, know that neither he nor his connections are worth the sum of money fixed upon his head.

The case of poor *Frost* was still more wicked. He had been drinking with his friends at a coffee-house, in a private room; and was retiring to his home, when a man stopped him as he was going through the coffee room: "I think you are *Citizen Frost*"—"Yes, I am"—"You have been in France lately?"—"Yes, I have."—"How do you find things going on in France?"—"Oh very gloriously, every thing goes on just as it ought."—"Oh you are a liberty man; you are for liberty and equality I think."—"Yes, I am for liberty and equality."—"What for liberty and equality and no king?"—"Yes Sir, for liberty and equality and no king."—"What are you for liberty and equality and no king in England?" Vexed and indignant as every one must feel, under such circumstances, he replied, 'Yes, Sir, I am for liberty and equality and no king in England.'

I was present in the court when this cause was tried: and I heard this *Diabolus Regis*, fulminate such a volume of horrible denunciations, and opprobrium against the culprit, that one would have imagined, if one had only heard his speech, and not known the particular crime for which the man was tried, that he had absolutely endeavoured to murder the king, put his sons to the torture, and violate the purity of his daughters.

Indignation and not fear was stirred by these proceedings; and men became more and more democratic, when they saw the violence and injustice with which those who were the enemies of democracy proceeded.

The next step, however, instead of being a milder was of a more severe description. Men for speaking their sentiments in a convention—sentiments, many of which may be traced to the glorious Alfred himself, the founder of our liberty—sentiments which, at the period of the re-



revolution, would have been thought to be the boast and the glory of Englishmen. Britons—Men for speaking these sentiments, under that constitution which pretends to be the same as was established at the Revolution in 1688, were transported, like felons, to Botany Bay.

However what is the consequence? How ignorant must those men be who think opinions will be beaten down by persecution?—Are they ignorant of the history of their country? Are they ignorant of the history of that christianity, which they profess, but which they disgrace by their conduct? Do they not know that, when opinions are persecuted, if they have but the least portion of comparative truth, they will grow ten times stronger in consequence of that persecution?

Men who never troubled themselves with the investigation before, felt their blood boil within them at this treatment; and stepped forward to shew that they were not ashamed of being the advocates of men thus cruelly treated: and from being advocates of the men, they became advocates of the cause. Though they would not have been so but for the injustice with which those opinions were persecuted.

Well, finding every thing they had done to prevent the progress of liberty had only increased its progress—what was the next object? *Blood! Blood! Blood!* Ferocity could no longer be restrained. Those beings whose glaring eyes, rolling like fiends, and convulsive lips, quivering like beasts of prey, with savage expectation, exulted over those beings whom they thought they had in their power, and thus made a place, which ought to be the seat of wisdom and of sanctity, a sort of bear-garden by their ferocity—and who treated the persons who were brought before them like reptiles unfit to be looked at—these wretches—pardon me if I am too warm in my expressions—Humanity cannot always bear with patience the recollection of such insulting brutality, as I have encountered!—These beings attempted to take away the lives of men for persevering in doctrines they themselves had set afloat; and upon the stream and current of which they had sailed into the port of power.

In the midst of their ferocity, however, they were cowards. They did not dare to act a wicked part like men: and in order to fortify themselves against the consequences of so illegal an act, they seduced persons, who, till that time were supposed to have some little character, to join them,

them, and make a most unnatural coalition, and Whig and Tory joined together in a faction so heterogeneous, as was never before thought of; that thus by their united power they might venture to destroy a few plain, simple, fortuneless, unconnected men, who had dared to tell their fellow citizens that they ought to be free, and that the principles which were true when these men were out of power, continued still to be so now they are in. Hence came forward, from the same cowardly spirit, the assassin-like attempts of toad-eating scribblers and hired journalists. A pamphlet was published by Mr, *Reeves's* Bookseller, the very title of which treated us as if we were already convicted; speaking of *the treason committed by the persons now in custody upon a charge!*

What affirm that a treason was actually committed, and send these affirmations in heaps to every corner of the country, while the men remained yet untried; and the minister and all the lawyers around him had not found out what specific crime to charge upon the warrant! What, was this prejudication to be permitted in this *land of liberty*? Yes and more flagitious prejudications still.

Sir *John Rose*, the Recorder of London, and one of the commissioners, by whom we were afterwards to be tried, if the papers recorded justly his speech on that occasion, stood up in his judicial capacity upon the swearing in of the new Sheriffs, and accused us, as though we had been men already convicted, of having conspired against the life of the King. "Gentlemen, you will have in the discharge of your functions, duties of peculiar importance to fulfil. You will have to take charge and custody over men who have had the profligate audacity to lift the arm of treason, against the sacred life of the King."

These are our *Judges!!!* O Britons! Britons!—What is our situation if upon such Judges; and such witnesses as those who sent us before such judges thought fit to provide, the pure administration of justice is to depend.

But Citizens, these continual calumnies and prejudications would not do; these are attempts which the passions of men cannot endure. These are attempts which even the perverted judgments of Aristocrats will not approve. They had stretched the cord till it broke: and the men whose lives they sought, found glorious champions among the foremost leaders at the bar; they wanted not the assistance



assistance of honest men in another branch of the profession; and they found a glorious asylum in that port and harbour of British liberty—[AN INDEPENDENT JURY! which all the arts (and arts enough were appealed to) of courtiers and ministers could not corrupt.

This attempt broke the charm of popular infatuation. The furious Aristocrats hid their heads in confusion; and I am happy to say, the Democrats had the virtue and the wisdom not to abuse their triumph. Instead of becoming more furious, they became more moderate; and shewed the genuine excellence of their principles, by not falling into that intemperance which the enthusiasm of weak minds is too apt to produce, but which must be always injurious to the cause of truth and virtue!

But citizens, there is another way in which these persecutions served the cause of liberty. It was pretty universally believed, that one of the terms of agreement made with certain parties when they came into the Grand Cabinet Coalition, was, that the minister should absolutely prove us to have been guilty of High Treason, and convict us accordingly.

Having found with what security and confidence he could *promise and vow in the name of a House of Commons*, without the trouble of a previous consultation, the minister was ready to offer himself as godfather also for a British Jury: but a British Jury is not a British House of Commons; and that which he promised in their names, they did not think, *when they came to meet, that themselves were bound to perform.*

The country perceiving two such strong and mighty factions, become so weak and so impotent, that they were obliged to combine together in this extraordinary manner, and to adopt such extraordinary measures, against a few simple unconnected men, began to enquire what the reason of this could be; and they immediately found that the real reason was *corruption*—that these virtuous Whigs finding they had no longer any chance of having all the loaves and fishes to their own share, very prudently consented to take half the loaves and fishes, rather than have none at all!

This then destroyed all confidence in party: and confidence in party has always been found the greatest enemy to the principles of liberty, and the genuine rights of mankind. It is in principles only that you can confide; and

and no man can be entitled to countenance or affection, but as he is subservient to those glorious principles upon which the rights and happiness of mankind are built, and upon which alone those rights and that happiness can be supported.

The enormous taxation with which the people are burdened is another of the operating causes: and when they found themselves, by the multiplication of places and pensions, burdened with additional loads, this led them to consider a little more deeply the principles of that democratic branch of the constitution, without which the constitution of this country would be worth nothing at all. When they found that not only *aristocrats* but *opposition men* had places and pensions; when they found that not only the Tory *Pitt* and the Tories that adhered to him, but the Whig *Stormont*, now *Mansfield*, and other Whigs held places of some thousands a year, paid by the toil and industry of the people—when they found that illustrious ornament, in point of intellect, to the country in which he lives—that man of powerful mind whose exertions have contributed alone to furnish any respectability to the Whig Party during the last half century—that even *Fox*, though in truth he *holds* no sinecure place, has *spent the money for which he sold one*: and that therefore he found himself bound to contend that patent places are property so sacred that you must not venture to attack them; not even in the shape of taxation; when they found all this was it possible for them not to see through the juggle of the present system, and to wish for an assembly in which the democracy should be purely and truly represented?

In this then it is palpable, that both parties are agreed. Administration and Opposition are in harmonious concert: when Mr. *Harrison* brought forward a motion for laying a tax upon the places of persons receiving favors from the Crown Mr. *Pitt* thought it impossible any *honourable gentleman* could suppose the *honourable gentleman* to be in earnest. No, no, he could not suppose the *honourable gentleman* could mean any thing but a joke. Astonishing assurance! as though he should have said in direct language, “What does the *honourable gentleman* suppose, after we have been grasping at power so long and so successfully—after we have devised so many expedients to turn that power to our own advantage—after we have laid such burdens upon the shoulders of the people, in order



der that we may fill our own coffers—after we have taken such pains to secure to ourselves the plunder of the country, does the honourable gentleman suppose us to be so weak and inconsistent, as, that we will now suffer by our own free will and consent, any part of that plunder to be taken away from us!"

Thus, then, whatever disagreement there may be between Whigs and Tories, as to who ought to have the largest share of those places and pensions, and the like, it is evident that they are perfectly agreed, that no part of this sacred property shall be touched for the purpose of lightening the burden of the people. Nor is *John Bull* so blind as not to perceive the juggle: and hence an additional reason for wishing the restoration of that true Democratic House of Commons by which alone this juggling can be put an end to.

Citizens, I am afraid I shall not be able to go through all the subjects I proposed this evening. I believe I shall not be able to enter at large into the blunders, the ridiculous professions, the bravadoes and boastings with which the present war has been attended. Suffice it to say, the people have opened their eyes, and, having discovered the real objects of the war, are dissatisfied with its continuance. They have begun to enquire how this war came to have been undertaken; and they perceive it to have been undertaken, in consequence of their having no organ to represent their interests in the national Council—and they begin to think also that the man who earns every thing, whose labour creates all the wealth of the country, has almost as much right to have some voice in naming the representatives by which the country is to be governed, as those who produce nothing but consume the whole.

Something too towards opening the eyes of the people, has been done by the imbecility with which this war has been conducted—which began with bullying, was carried on with absurdity, and is likely to terminate with disgrace. This war and this conduct of the war has tended to a considerable degree to open their eyes: and blunders and disgraces, tho' they have not made the Minister a whit wiser, have had some effect upon the people; and, if I am not much mistaken, *he will find that they* are somewhat wiser than they were.

I hope they will be wise enough; that whatever they attempt they will attempt by peace, reason and justice: not by tumult  
and

and violence. Commotion and coercion are the game of the Minister; enquiry and reason are the game for us: because we have truth on our side, and if we once persuade the great multitude of the people (and soldiers are people as well as we are)—if we can once convince the great body of the people that they have rights; and persuade them peaceably and firmly to demand their rights, I should like to see the four or five hundred men, or the four or five thousand, who would have the impudence (not to say the courage) to stand against the congregated voice of the nation. It is the very nature of men, who are wrong, who feel they are convicted of wrong, and are confronted by millions having truth on their sides, to blush and retire; and violence is only rendered necessary by the intemperance of those who have not patience enough to wait for the peaceful operations of human reason.

Citizens, there is one very important thing however which the present war has taught us, it has taught us the absurdity of the idea that *one Englishman can beat half a dozen Frenchmen*. It has taught us that if Englishmen, formerly, had any advantage over Frenchmen, it was only because the English were more free than the French: for that liberty and enthusiasm are every thing, and climate, feature, and complexion nothing at all.

The infatuation of Ministers however still continues. They have rummaged all the universe almost to find out persons, who would accept of pensions, commonly called subsidies, in order to support the alliance; and having ranged almost the whole of this terraqueous globe, I suppose the next step will be to subsidize the Prince of the infernal regions himself, and get him to become their ally; as being a fit—perhaps the fittest agent for their purpose.

Nay, there are strong symptoms of some negotiation of this sort already; for they have lately acquired an Ally who may be supposed, by some, to have dealings with that great personage—and to be in no small degree in his confidence: and I should not be at all surprized if Mrs. *Williams*, of *Store Street*, who so timely stepped forward to boast her loyalty to the King, and acquaintance with the Queen of this country, and dedicated her work to her, foretelling that *Louis XVIII.* would be restored to the Crown of France; that the Stadtholder would be restored in Holland, and that the arms of Britain (in defiance of the false prophecies of Brothers) would be triumphant, and the house of Brunswick preside upon the British throne for ever—I should not be at all surprized if this  
 august.



august personage should by and by produce her formal credentials, and take upon herself the character of Minister Plenipotentiary from his Sooty Highness: and then both the Pope and the Devil may have their Ambassadors at Court; and the atheistical practice of burning them in effigy on the 5th of November, disgrace the country no more!

But there is one reason why, perhaps, an alliance of this kind might not so very much contribute towards increasing the spirit of democracy among us as some other alliances have: for we are informed that spirits neither eat nor drink; and that the Devil has wealth enough in Pandemonium already. He will not, therefore, want either subsidy or loan; and it will not be necessary to send our bread and beef to the lower regions to feed these new allies. This, however, we are obliged to do for our other allies, and the common people finding themselves reduced to misery and starvation, as in the most fertile parts of this country you may, if you chuse, see that they are reduced!—I say, the common people finding themselves so reduced, for the sake of supporting the principles of aristocratic domination and usurpation, is it not natural that they should be repelled with disgust from principles the maintaining of which cost them so dear; and be led to enquire whether the cheaper dominion of pure justice and free equal representation is not to be preferred to the expence of aristocratic corruption?

Citizens, I cannot part from you without saying a few words relative to the condition of the lower orders of society. You who listen to me are most of you persons who are raised, in some degree, above the misery which I have been condemned to view: but do not suppose, because you are a few steps higher on the ladder of society, that the lower steps can be broken away without securing your destruction.

Citizens, in the Isle of Wight, where Nature seems to have poured her beauties, her sublimity and her fertility with the most lavish hand, where the common average of production upon every acre of land is a third part more than the average of the other parts of Britain—in the midst of this fertility, in the midst of this abundance, in the midst of all the sublime beauties and romantic scenes which that enchanting country presents, how often has my heart ached to behold the beggared misery of the great body of the people.—*Great body!* No, there is no great body of people there. Population is wasting away. Turn wherever you will, you see cottages falling into ruin; you see mansions of luxury rising, the  
fine

fine feelings of whose masters cannot endure the sight of wretchedness: and who, therefore, permit not a cottage to rise within their vicinity. There you may see the little farmhouse turned into the summer house of some gentleman or lady of quality; the grounds upon which the farmer lived turned into *Fermes Orne's*, where the produce is grasped by the luxurious individual who has laid out the country for his pleasure and amusement. It is true it is better that they produce corn there than that they should lay it out entirely in articles of pleasure and luxury. But what is the consequence? The wealthy individual hoards up the grain. He has no calls for rent; he has no particular necessities to compel him to do justice to society, and bring his corn to a fair market; and therefore he speculates, and waits for an opportunity to take advantage of the artificial distresses of mankind: and to such a height are these speculations carried, that corn in the *Isle of Wight* has been sold this summer at 20l. and 24l. a load, standing on the ground: though in the memory of the oldest man alive in that island it was never 12l. before.

Citizens I have not concluded the picture. It happens that this island produces in one year, as is admitted by all the historians, as much grain and cattle as would maintain the inhabitants ten. It produces, also, the greatest abundance of shell fish, particularly crabs and lobsters, which are sent to the London market. The markets, also, of Portsmouth, Gosport and Southampton are supplied with vegetables from this spot—and boats, and even large vessels, are built in the ports and creeks. Yet with all this, except in a few particular spots, the country is almost a Desert in point of population; and sometimes they are reduced to the greatest distress to get in their harvest.

You will suppose then, that the peasantry being so few, live in happiness and comfort; that they have decent apparel, decent education, eat a little meat twice or three times a week at least. But, alas! No such thing. Their wages are not sufficient for bread. Their children run in barefoot beggary in groupes, at the chariot wheels of their oppressors; and they will run for miles to get a halfpenny by opening a gate to let you pass through; save your servant the trouble of dismounting, as if the curse of Canaan had fallen upon them that servants unto servants they should be. And thus is the universal condition of the peasantry of that country. I have been grieved at my heart to see human beings thus brought up in ignorance. I have

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been



been grieved to my soul to see beings whom nature made my equals thus subjected by usurping man to cringing beggary: and doome I to play tricks and anticks to extort that from the levity of their beholders which compassion will not impart. I have grieved to see the finest forms in the world (for the rustic females of the island have peculiar advantages in point of person) climbing over rocks to collect lampets—miserable shell fish that tick to the shelves and shingles, to sustain an existence destitute of comfort, destitute of intelligence, destitute of every enjoyment—nay of every decent necessary of life.

Oh citizens, reflect, I conjure you, that the common class of mankind and you are one! that you are one in nature! that you are one in interest! and that those who seek to *oppress the lower*, seek to *annihilate the intermediate orders*. It is their interest to have but two classes, the very high and the very low, that those they oppress may be kept at too great a distance—and in too much ignorance to be enabled to seek redress; and that those who partake of their favors may take as little as possible from them of the wages of corruption and iniquity.

I have generally been most anxious about the condition of the most distressed orders of society, because they have seldom an anxious advocate: we are apt to feel disgust at abject misery and wretchedness, and the sickly imagination turns away from such objects of contemplation. It is therefore that I dwell particularly upon their case. But it is not to one class of the people I wish to confine myself; I wish not to limit justice to a particular sphere.—I would have it extend throughout the universe, and be participated to every being, whatever be his condition, his colour, nation or his circumstances. It is universal, and not partial justice that I contend for: the rights and happiness of the universe, not the amelioration and benefit of a particular class.

Let me however conjure the middling orders of society to remember that they are particularly interested: that if we have not peace and reform in time, those who are now the middling, must soon be the lower orders; for oppression, though it begins with the poor and helpless mounts upwards from class to class till it devours the whole: and let it be remembered, even by the wealthy and unfeeling merchant, who is now but too often the  
ready

ready instrument of ministerial tyranny, that the only favor reserved for him is like the favor of *Polyphemus* to *Ulysses*--"You have endeavoured to gladden my heart," said the one-eyed monster, "by the beverage you have imparted; and therefore when I have devoured your companions; when I have torn their limbs to pieces, and banquetted on their flesh, you shall be the last sacrifice that shall be made to my rapacious maw."



## THE HORRORS OF ROYAL AMBITION.

*From the BATTLE of BARNET, a Poem in the Peripatetics*

[Continued from p. 208.]

LOUD cries of vengeance speak their brave despair;  
Raging they turn; as wolves their hunters tear:—  
Or as the Elephant, whose giant might  
Is arm'd by Nature for resistless fight,  
His haughty rage by martial art increas'd,  
Tramples the myriad armies of the East—  
Then (gall'd with wounds, and frantic with his pain)  
Turns on his friends; assails the shrinking train,  
And with promiscuous carnage strews the plain.

So turns the tide of this disastrous day,  
And their own swords the Earl's fierce squadrons slay;  
Friend falls by friend, on comrades comrades charge;  
And raging Devastation stalks at large—  
O'er hills of slain his limbs enormous rears,  
Joins the loud shout, and thunders in their ears;  
Calls to their destin'd feast his vulture brood;  
Whets his keen fangs, and bathes his lips with blood:  
While frighted Pity, shrieking o'er the plain,  
Bares her white breast, and wrings her hands in vain.

While thus the "Dogs of War," with wild despair,  
Those who "let slip," their furious havoc tear,  
The bated chief, who stain'd his tusks with gore,  
"And made the forests tremble with his roar,"  
Among his hunters, long, indignant, stands  
O'er the strew'd wreck of his disorder'd bands;  
This way and that the deathful fury deals,  
And tenfold rage his hopeless pangs reveals;  
Resolv'd, and furious, in this closing strife,  
To crown the savage slaughters of his life;  
Till, fate-commissioned, flies the thirsting dart,  
Drives thro' his breast, and quivers in his heart—  
Here, on this spot, perhaps, where now I tread,  
Writhing in death, his mighty limbs were spread;  
And while his vassals, prodigal of blood,  
Pour'd on his tyrant corse the vital flood,  
And kept alive the dying flame of fight,  
Till added deaths appeas'd his sullen sprite,  
In dust and blood sob'd forth that fiery soul  
Earth could not hold, and Heaven could scarce control.

## THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XXVI.

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*Report on the STATE OF POPULAR OPINION, and the Causes of the rapid Diffusion of DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. Part the Third. Including Inquisitorial Associations--Principles and Conduct of the War--Starvation--IMPOLITIC TREATMENT OF THE SOLDIERY, &c. Delivered at the Lecture Room, Beaufort Buildings, September 11th, 1795.*

### CITIZENS,

ON the last evening I entered into an investigation of the different species of democracy, or rather of the different interpretations which have been given to the word. And though I did not deny that there might be some prevalence of a spirit of absolute democracy among us, the object to which I particularly directed your attention, was that *Constitutional democracy* which ought to prevail in this country, which I conceived generally did prevail, and which I recommended to your zealous affection and diligent cultivation.

I shall enter upon the business of this evening, by observing that in the former lecture, I was compelled to pass over some topics in a more slight manner than, upon review, I find consistent with their importance. Among other subjects, there are many facts relative to the war, and the influence it has had in rousing in the public mind an anxious desire for the revival of our constitutional democracy, which were then not animadverted upon; and also certain circumstances preparatory to the present infamous crusade, which were indeed very slightly passed over. The one I shall particularly notice is the system of inquisition introduced by the *Reevite* associators: a system, it is true, which late events have contributed, in a considerable degree, to supersede in England, but which still continues to rage, in another part of the nation, I mean in Scotland, with a degree of obstinacy which would be surprising, if one did not recollect that *when Judges are permitted to make the law which they are to expound, there is no tyranny*



*so abominable, no absurdity so gross, which they will not have the effrontery to practise!*

Citizens, during the last season, I had an assistant or secretary of the name of *Kennedy*, whose only recommendation to me was that I knew he had been driven by persecution from Scotland: a country in which no man, however innocent, will stay to be tried if he can get out of it; because there accusation and condemnation are the same thing: one of the Judges of the Court of Justiciary having indeed avowed as much, by saying in so many words, "*Gin they had na been guilty, they would na have been brought here!*"

This citizen, contrary to the advice of his friends, returned to Scotland, and was, of course, thrown into the Tol-booth, and a very curious charge is exhibited against him—to wit—of having been guilty of absenting himself from Scotland, when the treason hunters were after him; and having "come to England, and there connected himself with the "disaffected, conspirators against our happy constitution:" which last, as I understand, are the words of the *Procurator Fiscal*; and the interpretation of them is "having been secretary to an acquitted felon."

I dare say you had no idea before that you were a gang of conspirators, or that we may be conspirators without knowing it: just as mystical divines inform us, that men may *sin*—or, as they call it *fall*, ten times a day without being conscious of once tripping.

But perhaps it will not be amiss to take more particular notice of the origin of this system of inquisition, than I had time for on the last evening.

It had its commencement in the Reevite Association, which under the fanciful denomination of "Protectors of Liberty and Property," stepped forward to denounce every man whom they chose to consider as a leveller or republican, though they were not polite enough to give any interpretation of these cabalistic words.

This was one of the steps for precipitating the people into the present war. Numbers undoubtedly were deluded by the specious pretences of these men. But the thinking part of mankind, instead of being shocked from the principles of liberty, began to suspect that there must be something very improper in the administration of our constitution, when it could stand in need of such paltry props, to support its power and give it artificial consequence. This first attempt towards the Jacobinical establishment of "*club law*," was followed up by the *Meeting at Merchant Taylor's Hall*; where the merchants

chants of this rich and flourishing country assembled together to behave towards those who differed from their opinion with a degree of brutality that would have disgraced a St. Giles's Club. I beheld them, myself, distorting their countenances with every disgraceful expression of blackguardism; and, with hideous noises, thrashing their gnashing teeth and goggling eyes in the faces of those individuals who had the courage to hold up their hands against their propositions, telling them, in terms and accents the most ferocious, that they should mark them as disaffected men, and take care that they should meet with the punishment they deserved, for not being precisely of the opinion which they, in their great wisdom had picked out from the journals and ledgers in their counting houses.

I believe it is not difficult to prove that those associations contributed, in a very considerable degree, to increase the democratic principle; because they stamped an authority upon the very right they meant to dispute—the *right of popular association to direct, by the voice and will of the people, the dispositions and actions of the government.* They however were of a different opinion; and I am informed, from very good authority, that many of the ministerial merchants exulted with very great triumph, after this meeting; and in their letters to foreign and country correspondents, boasted triumphantly, and exclaimed, “well we have crushed those levelling rascals, effectually.

Citizens, I wish they had crushed the *levelling rascals*—for the only levelling rascals I ever knew in this country, are the *Reevite Associations* and *cowardly alarmists*.

Reeves's association publicly propagated the doctrine of levelling property, which was never thought of before. Reeves's association attempted to level all character to one common standard of baseness and insignificance, and to submit all the property of the country to the plunder of an upstart faction, struggling to retain the seat of power without law or constitution on their side, and without what is of still more authority, the affections and confidence of the people.

The alarmists were very anxious to hurry us into a war, by which how far the levelling system has been promoted let the innumerable bankruptcies that ensued, and the opulent families reduced to beggary declare.

But however these levelling principles of the Reevite associators and alarmists, might ultimately tend to strengthen the true principles of genuine democracy in our minds, it cannot be denied that, among a particular class of people a different



fort of impression was at first produced. Temporary infatuation, among the unthinking part of the community, was produced to a considerable degree by those associations, which was artfully increased by the inflammatory harrangues of placemen, pensioners, proprietors of rotten boroughs, and the expectants of commissions and contracts: who seemed, for a time, to be overwhelming every thing like democracy in our Constitution, and to be introducing a degree of tyranny which the country never before experienced. I say never before—for the tyranny of corruption, the tyranny of rotten borough-mongers, the tyranny of associated inquisitors, of men who hold their power and authority without any sort of sanction from the constitution whose forms they still pretend to reverence and preserve, is on account of its indefinable nature and *apparent* popularity, a tyranny more to be dreaded than that assumed by magistrates in the open eye of day, confirmed by arbitrary laws, or established by principles of pure despotism.

But the people in time began to discover the error into which they had fallen, and to be anxious to retrieve that error. It was however too late. The war had taken place; bankruptcy had stalked through every part of the country, and a general prospect of misery presented itself.

This situation of affairs produced a conviction upon the popular mind, that if we had not been entirely left to the power of the miserable nominees of monopolists and money-jobbers, that it would have been impossible such an infatuation ever could have taken place. For if the Parliament be appointed annually, by *the people*, they will find an interest in seeking the real welfare of the people; but if, on the contrary, great Lords, monopolists and money-jobbers, are the only men who are to elect your representatives, they will be the only men whose interests will be consulted; and the great body of the people will be certainly a prey to those delusions which artful individuals will endeavour to spread, in order to gratify their individual ambition and promote their schemes of private interest.

This conviction began to take considerable hold upon the public mind; and the anxiety to restore the lost democracy of our constitution spread itself more amply among people of all descriptions: and hence it was that those more coercive measures, which I alluded to in the former lecture, were adopted: how vainly adopted you have all seen.

The next fatal blow to the system of monopolists and borough-mongers was the manner in which the war was conducted.

ducted. Britons have long been in the habit of boasting the openness and generosity of their spirit. Proud of their courage, zealous to defend the reputation of frankness, they were shocked to see that instead of open attack, famine was to be made the instrument for the destruction of a brave and generous people; that corruption was to supply the place of open effort; and that intrigue, treachery, cabal and purchased insurrection were to be employed in the heart of the enemy's country. Then it was that Britons began to blush at the reflection of having lost that freedom, upon which depended the generous energies of their souls and the noble character in which they had so long prided themselves.

This system of hired insurrections however is not to be abandoned. To support *the just claim of regular governments to the exclusive reputation of faith*, the Vendéans, who had made their peace with the republic, are to be hired, with *British* gold, once more to violate every oath and contract, and to lift the dagger of assassination once more against the generous and confiding breast of that republic, which had had the magnanimity to pardon their rebellion, and to restore them to the bosom of the country they had endeavoured to destroy. And this, we are told, proves the good principles of the royalists of *La Vendee*: for Windham, in one of those curious metaphysical speeches in which he frequently indulges himself, commenting, during the last session, upon the treaty between the royalists of *La Vendee* and the republic, says, "It is very true these men have made their peace with the republic; and all seems in a degree to be restored to tranquillity; but when I consider the whole of the circumstances," (perhaps he knew more of the whole of the circumstances than we are informed of!) "I am sure that I perceive a body of good principles still existing in *La Vendee*, which may be turned to the advantage of the alliance!"

What then are the good principles of aristocracy violation of faith, perjury, injustice? Are these the good principles we are told to admire? And can the men who vent such sentiments in a popular assembly, expect any other than a growing conviction in the public mind that the principles which induce them to utter such expressions, ought to be abhorred by all good men. If these are the champions of aristocracy, they will say, give me the pure plain principles of democrats, who think that faith ought to be sacred, and solemn engagements ought not to be made for the purpose only of being violated.

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But it is not only by the manner in which the war has been conducted, with respect to principle, that the democratic feeling has spread among us. Its successes, so *glorious* and so *splendid*, and its expences, so *mild* and so *moderate*, have contributed in a still greater degree to bring the conviction, that if we do not wish to be *levelled indeed*, in universal beggary, we must appeal to those democratic principles of our constitution which, if never violated, would have saved us from the mischief, and which, if restored, will restore us once more to peace, plenty and glory.

Yes, Citizens, *John Bull* is rather a sleepy animal it must be confessed. He has not all the mercury of our neighbours; but *John Bull* has two nerves of sensibility, yet remaining: one of which is conveyed, by proper meandrings, to his stomach, and the other to his pocket. Touch but the papillary nerves that open themselves into either of these receptacles, and immediately the whole frame is seized with convulsive vibrations, and his exquisite sensibility is delineated in every feature.

The Minister has been determined that these nerves shall not lose their sensibility for want of being frequently stimulated. He has, therefore, taken good care to make frequent applications to the pocket; and, in the course of two campaigns, has expended seventy millions of money, while he is now crying aloud, if report may be believed, for thirty millions more.—Glorious consequence of a war, begot by corruption, fostered by the fears of aristocracy, and persevered in to preserve the sacred rights of rotten boroughs, and prevent the ruins of Old Sarum from being overgrown with the moss of political oblivion!

With respect to the stomach, the sensibility of that has been equally affected: for what with the stoppage of our external supplies, and the waste of our internal produce, poor *John Bull* has been almost reduced to that situation in which the gastric juice preys upon its own receptacle for want of other employment.

This country ought, and, if well governed, would produce much more of all the necessaries of life than are required by the inhabitants. Yet, what with the impolitic regulations that are made, what with the neglect of cultivation, what with the wasteful extravagance of some, and the monopolizing arts of others, we find that it does not produce a quantity sufficient for its maintenance.

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I shall not now enter into a particular investigation of the causes of this. Suffice it to say, that this being our situation, the measures adopted during the present war have tended in no small degree to aggravate the evil. We suffered *Poland*, the granary of *Europe*, to be destroyed, to gratify the ambition of a man who, as soon as he had got possession of the prize, abandoned those who had been secretly parties to the infamous fraud. Corn has also been sent out, from time to time, to supply foreign armies: as if every mouth were to be fed but the mouth of the British peasant. Every mercenary soldier is supplied at the expence of *Britain*; and British produce is sent away with an extravagance never heard of before. Witness, for example, even in the midst of all the starving misery of the people—witness the immense stores sent to supply the rascally Emigrants at Quiberon: those wretches, the authors of all the desolations of their own country! the authors of all the calamities under which the nations of the world at this time groan! whose infamous delusions, whose treachery, and whose barefaced profligacy would have prevented any administration, but the present, from lending them that countenance which they have experienced! these beings, seventy thousand of whom, like a flock of geese, fled from the fiery looks of the republicans! these were to be sent back to conquer the country, whose glorious efforts have almost laid *Europe* prostrate at its feet; and British gold, British stores, British ammunition, and British food was to be sent to support them; whatever might be the sighs and groans, and anguish of those *Britons*, who languished in want of that which was thus wantonly thrown away.

Yes, Citizens, these were the men that were to be favoured. They were aristocrats. They were friends to the old *despotism of France*: and therefore, by the ministers of the *free country of Britain*, certainly ought to be countenanced. If they were in misery or misfortune, they were to receive their half guinea a week, out of the public purse, and Mr. Pitt was to insert in his budget, so much money applied to the distressed clergy and laity of *France*, while thousands of industrious families were to subsist upon 7s. 8s. or less, the reward of intolerable drudgery for twelve or fourteen hours a day. But there are good reasons for this. If you pamper those without whose assistance you could not be pampered yourselves, they will be saucy,  
will



will think they have rights ; and thus you will be precluded from the opportunity of swelling to unwieldy opulence by places and pensions ; while those who produce that opulence are in misery and subjection.

Such is the aristocratic argument ; but the plain truth is, the further you sink them into subjection, the more they will be dissatisfied ; the more you compel them to a state of ignorance, the more disposed to violence : and if you are disposed really to preserve them in that subordination which the order of society requires, restore them to their rights ; let them feel that they are human beings, that you *love them as brethren*, not that you *lash them as taskmasters do their slaves*.

Citizens, at the very time that these emigrants were thus provided for, in the house of industry in the Isle of Wight, which is boasted of by topographers as the best regulated receptacle of charity throughout the country, so miserable was the condition of those who are there maintained at constant and hard labour, that the present master of that house, after having made repeated remonstrances to the *Gentlemen* who hold the purse of the island, upon the scanty manner in which they are provided for, has at last sent into them his determination that, if they will not feed the poor better, he will not remain in his situation : for that he can no longer endure to hear *the cries of starving children who call to him for bread which he is not permitted to give them*.

Yet the *Chouans* must be fed !—the *midnight murderers of Britany* must be provided with the necessaries and comforts of life !—the stores of this country must be exhausted, and its provisions sent forth, that these *royalists*, these great supporters, these enlightened advocates for the cause of despotism may not be beaten down under the arm of republican freedom ! and, at this very time, contracts are making in Ireland, to buy up *fresh stores and provisions*, to send to the coast of France, to be consumed in foolish expeditions in quest of defeat and infamy : and so great is the exhaustion, that salted provisions being no longer to be obtained, they are buying up *live cattle* in Ireland to send upon this mad project.

Now I should like to know how it is possible for the common people of this country to perceive that they are starving for the support of the cause of *aristocracy abroad*, without having their affections strengthened for *democracy*  
at

at home. If they should sometimes in the wild extravagance of their imaginations, go farther than the infallible letter of the law prescribes; if they should sometimes in their speculations not even be satisfied with that democracy which the laws and constitution of the country say they ought to enjoy, can we blame them? Can we wonder, when those who at present are trampling upon the constitution of which they call themselves the supporters, if those who have but little information should draw this hasty conclusion:—*If this be the constitution of Britain, the British Constitution ought to be revered no more. We are for a constitution of equal rights, and general plenty; and not a constitution of ambition and starvation!*

But one of the great causes of the increase of the democratic principle is the conduct of the present administration to the engines by which they seem to intend that their own power should be supported: I mean the military.

Whoever is acquainted with the history of nations, must have observed, that it is the uniform practice of wicked ministers, who aspire to arbitrary dominion, in the first instance, to seek for the establishment of a large military force. They know very well that two or three, five or six hundred individuals, whatever their rank, fortune, or situation, can never trample upon the liberties of mankind, unless mankind are weak enough to assist them in such an attempt. This conviction is very ancient in this country: and there was a time when our ancestors, jealous of the preservation of their rights, took care that *the strength and power of the country should also be the strength and power of its liberties*. They knew well, *laws made for the benefit of all, are best supported by putting arms in the hands of all*: and therefore by arming the great mass and body of the people, they took care to put it out of the power of a few usurpers to trample upon the liberties of Britons, and to establish despotism in a country, the people of which, according to the wishes of ALFRED *ought ever to continue free as their own thoughts!*

The abhorrence of our ancestors to standing armies presents itself to us in the works of every political writer. Among the rest, Swift expresses himself in a letter to Pope in a very strong manner—"I had likewise," says he, "in those days a mortal antipathy against standing armies in times of peace; because I always took standing armies to be only servants hired, by the master of a family, for keeping  
No. XXVI. M m " his



“ his own children in slavery ; and because I conceived that  
 “ a prince who could not think himself secure without mercenary  
 “ troops, must needs have a separate interest from that of his  
 “ subjects: although I am not ignorant of those artificial ne-  
 “ cessities, which a corrupt minister can create for keeping up  
 “ forces to support a faction against the public interest.”

Such, Citizens, were the sentiments of *Swift*, and such were the sentiments of our ancestors in general ; such were the sentiments of *ALFRED*, when he established that glorious institution a *national militia*: an institution, by means of which he was enabled to purge the country from those depredators who had invaded it, and to lift it to a glory and happiness which it never had known before.

Nay, Citizens, so anxious were our ancestors for the establishment of this militia ; so anxious were they for excluding a standing army, that several laws had been made to punish those who neglect to have arms in their houses, and to instruct both themselves and families in the use of them. If you will read “ *Pulton's Reports* ” you will find (titles arms and archery) particular instruction who is bound to keep *pikes* in his house, who are to keep halberts, and who are obliged to have complete suits of armour. You will find that, in proportion to a man's property, he is obliged to keep a given quantity of arms ; not that it was thought necessary to keep the common people unarmed, but the cheaper sort of arms were assigned to the common people, because the common people could not procure those of the most expensive nature.

You will find, also, provisions made by those ancient laws to punish persons who, keeping journeymen in their houses, have neglected to have them trained to the use and exercise of arms ; and that every father of a family is punishable, by those ancient laws, if he neglects to instruct his children from the age of seven years to sixteen in the use of the long bow, and other implements, made use of in those days. Yet the pretended advocates for the laws and constitution of this country, make it a crime for any person to have a *pike* found in his house. Nay, they have even attempted to make it High Treason for any man to have known a man, who had ever spoken to another man, who ever had been in company with a fourth man, who had a *pike* found in his house, or any implements of defence whatever.

But,

But, Citizens, these men may perhaps tell you, and perhaps some part of their conduct would support the pretence, that they are ignorant of the laws of the country; but, unfortunately, they have themselves been the formers and supporters of the propriety of every man being armed. If we recur to a very curious pamphlet written by Lord *Hawkebury*, we shall find that he most strenuously recommends, as a constitutional and necessary measure, every individual providing himself with arms: that he might be able to repel every enemy by whom the country might be invaded; and even *Pitt* himself, in recent times, could not help acknowledging the excellency of a *national militia*; but let it slip over his tongue in a debate in the House of Commons, that it is impossible to subdue an armed nation—a very pretty argument this, to persuade the house to continue a war against the armed nation of *France*.

But amongst the most anxious and zealous defenders of this system, is to be reckoned the Duke of *Richmond*. His grace, while out of place, is very well known to have held correspondence with an armed convention: a convention of volunteers in Ireland. He is very well known also, to have commended the plan upon which those volunteers were proceeding; and to have supported their measures with all the might of his eloquence. But his conduct was even still more explicit upon the occasion which he had of delivering his sentiments in the corporation of *Chichester*.

"Gentlemen," said he,—if I may take the historian's liberty of putting his sentiments into my own language—  
 "let every man get arms; let every man learn the use of  
 "arms. It is only by recurring to the old institutions of  
 "Alfred—it is only by putting arms into the hands of every  
 "individual that we can support our liberties against the  
 "arts, intrigues, and corruptions of a minister, who  
 "would wish to trample under foot the rights and liberties of Britons—get arms, Gentlemen, therefore; get  
 "arms, that you may save yourselves the necessity of an  
 "immense standing army. Resist with all your might a  
 "system so diabolical, for, if once you suffer a standing  
 "army in the country, the liberties of Britain are gone  
 "for ever; nor will it be in the power of all the patriots  
 "in whom you may confide, to snatch you from the despotism which a standing army must inevitably produce."

Yet,



Yet, Citizens, when the Duke of *Richmond* was Master of the Ordnance, he found how *necessary* it was to fortify, by standing armies, the power which he and his friends had gotten: and when a member of the same corporation not quite so versatile, some time ago proposed that the citizens at Chichester should be armed, he writes a letter to that corporation, to inform the members of it that "the individual who could support such a measure was an enemy to his king and constitution."

"Arm all the citizens," he might be conceived to say, "no, you must only arm those few we can depend upon: whose principles we are acquainted with: and whose loyal attachment to pensioners and placemen, and rotten borough-mongers can be depended on, if those pensioners, placemen, and rotten borough-mongers should call for their exertions, to silence the voice of reform, which I myself taught to be loquacious, and to crush the rising spirit of that freedom which, however proper when I was out of place, is certainly high treason, now that I am in."

This Duke of *Richmond* was once a flaming WHIG. But we have found that there is one point, at least, upon which WHIGS and Tories unanimously agree: namely, that every measure by which they can help themselves into power is legal and constitutional; and that every measure that in the least threatens to oust them is *Treason*. There is, also, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, a very great degree of consistency in the language and sentiments of the present administration. You will find that they have, always, been advocates for ancient systems: but then, when out of place, their attachment was to the ancient system of *British liberty*; and now, when they are in place, their attachment is to the ancient system of *French despotism*.

Yes Citizens, the old French system is a very great object of attachment among our present Ministers; and they have been anxious to imitate, as far as possible, all its practices.

It is *High Treason* to imitate even the language of French liberty; but it is perfectly constitutional to imitate, not only the language, but the practices of French tyranny. Whence came the system of spies? Did it not come from the old despotism of France? Is it a practice congenial with the open character of Britons? Is it a practice consistent

sistent with liberty, and with that social harmony which a free constitution ought to support?—Whence, also, comes your *police*? established, it is true, under pretence of keeping the peace, but in reality, I believe, for the express purpose of organizing the system of spies and informers, who invaded the peace of all their fellow citizens; and providing rewards and establishments for those whose perjuries in Courts of Justice have vainly aimed at the life of innocent individuals! Come not both the institution and its name from the ancient despotism of France? To this I might add the list of proscriptions—the black books kept by the Reevite associators: in which every man's supposed opinion stands recorded! The most important imitation, however, is the adoption of *standing armies*: It may not be amiss to observe the exact conformity between practices among us and those which were adopted in France, when *Louis XIV.* established standing armies to support his growing despotism.

It was well known by that crafty monarch, that the despotic power he aimed at could not be supported without an immense military force; an immense military force was therefore determined upon. But say some of his counselors, “*May not the very power you raise to support your despotism turn their swords against you and overthrow it?*” How are we to avoid this inconvenience, for the army which is formidable to the people, is formidable also to the monarch whenever they chuse to be so. And the Janizaries who over-awe the slaves of Constantinople, hurl occasionally the sublime Sultan from his throne. O,” say others, “we will find a remedy for that; we will sow hatred and dissention in the centre of the army; and one class of soldiers shall burn with rancour and animosity against the other.”

To execute this design songs were dispersed among them written for the purpose of exciting mutual jealousies. Some for the *infantry*, some for the *cavalry*, some to one class, some to another.

This trick succeeded pretty well for the court. But what were the effects to the country? The army of France being thus disunited, and being excited by mutual aversion, were never able to stand against the armies of those countries in which union and mutual affection prevailed. This was one of the causes why the glory of Britain shone in ancient times so conspicuous when opposed to the military machines of enslaved France. This was one of the causes



causes why a nation abounding in so much gallant spirit, made so poor a figure, comparatively speaking.

But since this system of dragoon hating infantry, and infantry hating dragoon, has been banished from France,—since they have been fired by one hope and expectation, mark the enthusiasm with which they have swept every thing before them. Appeal to those gallant soldiers who have experienced their efforts for the character of those Frenchmen, who, inspired by unanimity, have become vindicators of rights and liberty!—they will tell you that courage and magnanimity have gone hand in hand, and displayed a conduct the very reverse of that which the prejudices of this country have led us to expect among them.

A similar object in this country has been pursued by measures, in some degree different. It is not by songs, for we are neither a singing nor a dancing nation, that those who wish to make all soldiers slaves have endeavoured to excite one part of the soldiery against the other; no they have found another way of doing it. They have divided the army into a vast number of distinctions, *dragoons, militias, infantry, cavalry, yeomanry, and voluntary associations*; and the most successful attempts have been made to prevent any degree of affection from existing between these different bodies. The *esprit de corps*, so unhappily prevalent among all classes of men, renders it easy to excite animosities; and a variety of arts are made use of, to keep up this animosity; so that they may be fit engines for the vengeance thus to be executed.

I shall give you an instance of this. A mutiny took place in one of the camps no very considerable time ago. The guards had been mutinous; and their officers found some part of their claims so just, and the men so obstinate, that they were obliged to pay some degree of attention to them. After having promised them the redress which they demanded, it is very confidently reported that this sort of speech was made to them: “Gentlemen, I know how  
“these dispositions have grown up among you. You have  
“been talking to the *militia*. They have sown the seeds of  
“discontent among you! Gentlemen, why will you con-  
“descend to talk with the *militia*? Are not you *Gentlemen*  
“*Guards*? Are not you the defenders of his Majesty’s person?  
“You should disdain to disgrace yourselves by holding con-  
“versation with *militia men*; a company much too mean  
“for

" for you: and therefore you ought to be above it; and to  
 " keep yourselves from the contamination of them.

" Gentlemen, if I were to meet with any of the *militia*,  
 " I should think myself disgraced if I sat down with them.  
 " I would advise you to preserve the dignity of your situa-  
 " tion; and depend upon it you will receive the favours con-  
 " sistent with such conduct!"

Now, Citizens, if this language was in reality held, I ask you what sort of principle, what sort of justice and propriety could there possibly be in it? What, shall soldiers be set against soldiers? Shall guards be set against militia-men, and militia-men against fencibles? Shall fencible be set against dragoon, and dragoon against fencible? If this is the case, say what degree of safety and protection must you expect, if the time ever should arrive when your wives and your children are to be protected from the sword of foreign hostility.

Citizens, to me it appears that it would have been much more proper to address the soldiery of Britain in this manner.

" Citizen soldiers, never forget that you are men enlisted  
 " not to support the authority of a few particular individuals,  
 " but to protect the rights, liberty and property of the coun-  
 " try. If you have complaints submit them in a peaceable  
 " manner to those who should take cognizance of those com-  
 " plaints. Indulge not a mutinous spirit, by which the liber-  
 " ties and peace of the country may be disturbed, by which  
 " part of you may be submitted to the cruel necessity of ope-  
 " rating against another; but cultivate the feelings of affec-  
 " tion between man and man. Let *Dragoons* remember they  
 " are bound to love the *infantry*, who are the main strength  
 " of an army; let the *infantry* remember that they are bound  
 " to love that *cavalry* which is to co-operate with them, and  
 " without whose assistance they must be often impotent, and  
 " inadequate to the protection of their country. Let both  
 " remember they are to love the *militia*, the constitutional  
 " guardians of the sacred rights of Britons. Let the *militia*-  
 " men, also, remember that they ought to love the other  
 " members of the army; because they are to co-operate with  
 " them for the same great object. Remember, also, that the  
 " name of *fencible corps*, or whatever names may be given to  
 " particular men, alter not their nature. That every man is  
 " the brother of every man; and that upon the great princi-  
 " ple of fraternity you are to act according to the spirit of  
 " justice, of liberty, and true military discipline, in preserv-  
 ing



“ ing the peace and protecting the happiness of your fellow  
 “ Citizens, that you may return, loved and crowned with  
 “ civic wreathes, to your wives and families, who shall bless  
 “ you for transmitting the liberties of your ancestors to them  
 “ and their posterity.”

“ Citizen soldiers, as you are men you ought to love man-  
 “ kind. As you are Britons you ought to cherish British  
 “ liberty. As you are soldiers of a free nation you ought to  
 “ be jealous of freedom. One soul alone ought to actuate  
 “ you. One object you should have continually in view—  
 “ the freedom and happiness of your country. Not the ag-  
 “ grandizement of a faction to whom you were never meant  
 “ to be tools, but the protection of the just rights, the just  
 “ liberties and real happiness of those, whom if you are once  
 “ made the instruments to enslave, you do but forge fetters  
 “ for yourselves more intolerable than those you confer upon  
 “ your brethren, whom you ought not to cease to love, be-  
 “ cause they do not wear a coat of the same complexion with  
 “ your own.”

But it is lamentable to observe how successfully the language most opposite to this has been upheld. Every one who is at all acquainted with the military can inform you that the *militia* envy the *fencibles* for their supposed privileges and advantages; that the *fencibles* arrogate a superiority to the *militia*; that the *volunteers* disdain the *regulars*, whom they consider as a parcel of low inferior beings; and that the *regulars*, on the other hand, have contracted an inveterate hatred against the *volunteer associations*, whom they consider as tools of men of power and fortune associated against the liberty and happiness of the lower orders of the community.

I speak not this lightly. I have positive information of this being the case in parts of the country—Particularly, that this sort of language was held so continually by one of the regiments returned from the Continent, and quartered at *Chichester*, that it was found necessary to remove them from that place, lest massacres should take place between them and the gentlemen associators of that neighbourhood. The very words, “ Damn the scoundrels that associate against their own poor,” were repeated from company to company, and from man to man, till they quivered upon every lip.

What then may not be the dreadful consequence of attempting to sow these divisions, so destructive of all peaceful order, all respect both for laws and military discipline, without  
 which

which an army become, instead of defenders, the depredators and destroyers of their country.

These soldiers certainly inspired a considerable degree of panic and terror among the volunteers. Resignations were very common; or notices for resignations. Stories were told about these gentlemen soldiers, and the situation into which they were sometimes thrown, in consequence of this terror, are too ridiculous to mention in the present company. Suffice it to say, the dreaded regiment was again sent to the Continent, not only on this account; but because many of them were found diffusing democratic principles—principles, let me add, which the whole of this system has tended to spread very widely among the soldiery; and which all the attempts to suppress them, do but increase to greater obstinacy.

Nay, those very men who were enlisted and sent to the Continent, to destroy democracy abroad, have brought home a huge cargo of it into *England*, much to the alarm and terror of their rulers; and, therefore, they have most of them been sent back to the Continent, to support the cause for which they were known to have such an inveterate hatred.

I confess I have not myself conversed with the soldiery. I have taken my reports respecting them, from those on whose veracity I could confide: because I do not choose to have it said of me, however unjustly, that I tamper with the soldiery. I wish not to draw them from their allegiance to the King, but I wish them to know that they also owe an allegiance to the people whom they serve, part of whom they are, and with whose happiness their own prosperity is connected. But all the persons I have met with, who have by accident fallen in with the fragments (and scanty fragments in general they were) of regiments that returned from the Continent, have uniformly borne testimony to the good character which the British soldiery are generous enough to give to the French; whom they have declared, in open shops and public houses, were the only friends they met with upon the Continent. They were ill used, they say, by the *Dutch*; they were ill used by the *Austrians*; they were ill used by all the foreign troops with whom they expected to co-operate; and *their enemies*, the French, were the only men from whom they received any kindness or humanity. It is therefore, Citizens, that the greater part of these regiments, or fragments of regiments, are sent back to that Continent, from whence they were so lately withdrawn, or else dispatched to the *West Indies*, lest their Jacobinical doctrines should spread at home.



This policy has been pretty systematically pursued. Whenever it was found that any regiment possessed democratical principles, that regiment was immediately hurried out of the country. This was particularly the case with the *Scotch Greys*; who were found many of them reading *Paine's "Rights of Man."* They were, therefore, sent to the Continent: and I believe we shall not hear of the opinions of the *Scotch Greys* now.

But what has been the consequences of all this? Disastrous defeat! When men are sent to support a cause they do not approve, will they fight with enthusiasm in support of it? No, if you want enthusiasm among the military, it is by a different mode of conduct that you must endeavour to inspire it. It is not by persecuting them for opinions, it is not by making reading a crime among them, and ignorance the supreme virtue. No, it is by kind treatment; by justice and humanity—by giving them a real interest in the cause they are to support—In short, it is by mingling the proud independence of the citizen with the discipline of the soldier that the feelings of the hero can alone be inspired, and the exploits of real glory can be produced.

Yet so blind are our rulers to this truth, that I have certain information that some poor soldiers in the tower were threatened with all the severities of what is called military discipline, for having subscribed to take in the *Gazetteer*. The monstrous crime was discovered, and the alarm was instantly taken—"What, soldiers dare to read an opposition paper? Soldiers dare to look into any thing that shall find fault with any of his Majesty's Ministers? Military subordination could never endure it!" The poor men were obliged to relinquish their literary banquet; and some of them were threatened with black holes and bread and water.

But a stronger circumstance is yet to be mentioned. (One *Archibald Ewing*, who was a *Scotch Fencible*, was found to be very fond of reading. I don't know how it came into the minds of the officers, that it was impossible for a man to enquire, but he must become a democrat; but they immediately began to suspect that he was no friend to present measures. On the *King's birth-day*, therefore, as they were marching from one part of Scotland to another, the officers determined to put this man to the test. They had the soldiers seated in rings and gave them whiskey to drink his Majesty's health. The officer however of the corps did not think it enough to give the King's health alone, but coupled with it  
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a very curious sentiment, "*The King, and damnation to the French, and the friends of the people!*" Ewing did not, however, choose to drink damnation to the friends of the people; because he thought the people had as much right to have their friends as the King had to have his. Add to which that Ewing was a religious man, and did not think it such a mighty crime to be a friend to the people, that he ought to wish any man in eternal torments on that account. In short, he was a soldier, not a priest, and did not deal in anathemas; nor would he damn any body: and as they had given the toast in that manner, he refused to drink it at all.

For this crime, which was deemed mutiny, he was immediately, according to the lenient practices of that humane part of the country, put into confinement. He was chained upright, with fetters round his ankles and a collar round his neck, for some days, till he was tried by a Court Martial. There is a citizen present who can authenticate this if necessary. He was then condemned to receive five hundred lashes; but repeated assurances were given him that he should be pardoned, if he would declare that he was not "a friend to the people;" which he refused. Some of the townsfolks hearing of the manner in which he was treated, took him some food and other necessaries. But the humane magistrates of Scotland, being informed of these facts, prohibited any person, upon the pains and penalties of law, from giving him any assistance. So that bread and water would have been his only fare, for several days, if he had not been generously relieved by a fellow soldier. His obstinate virtue continued inflexible, a hundred lashes were humanely abated, and four hundred only laid upon his naked back; after which he was turned out of the regiment.

Now, Citizens, I will ask you, *Is it likely that soldiers should be otherwise than democratic, while they receive such treatment?* I will ask you if this is the proper manner to procure the vindication of our laws and the protection of our country? I will ask you whether, on the contrary, the proper way of attacking the soldiery is not to encourage, by proper rewards, instead of urging on by stripes and punishments?

Yes, Citizens, it is by reward and encouragements that you are to expect to rouse the valour of the British soldiery: and if you will give them proper pay, instead of exhausting all the resources of the country upon corruption, and treat them honourably and kindly, you will have little reason to find fault with human beings, for not having enthusiasm  
enough



enough in their attachment to their country; and not being sufficiently willing to expose themselves in the field of glory.

Give them, then, but the *rights of man*, to animate their courage, and you will still find your soldiery what they were once esteemed, invincible in the field and unequalled in generous exertions in the cause of liberty.

Citizens, I find it totally impossible, at this time of night, to enter upon the remaining and most important branch of this subject:—namely, the conduct of crimps and pressgangs. But before we part I will slightly mention a circumstance of a very extraordinary nature, and which has occupied a great deal of my attention to-day, and, in some degree, prevented me from preparing myself as I could have wished on such a topic. I have received documents tending to prove that this boy (*introducing a lad of twelve years old into the Tribune*) has been most barbarously crimped. I have received from the friends of this lad, and from his own mouth, circumstances which, if I can properly authenticate, I shall submit to your consideration on Wednesday evening. This lad—look at him!—see what a soldier-like appearance he has; and reflect how proper it is to trepan and steal such poor boys from the arms of their friends and relatives, and prematurely to shed their infant blood, in a struggle which it is impossible they should understand, or have an interest in. I will not state to you—neither time nor other circumstances will now permit—the particulars contained in this letter, which after his escape he wrote from *Northampton*, to his only friend and relative in London. I will not now state the variety of circumstances which these papers unfold. It is necessary, in order that I may preserve, even from *suspicion* of credulity or imposture, the dignity of my situation, to make such enquiries as to eradicate every possibility of doubt upon the subject. If I can substantiate the story, I shall unfold to you a scene of criminality so abominable, proceedings so horrid and flagitious, that if they do not immediately have redress, will bring a strong conviction to the breast of every man, that *in this country there is no longer protection for innocence, nor law for the friendless and poor!*

## THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XXVII.

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*Report on the STATE OF POPULAR OPINION, and Causes of the Increase of DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. Part the Fourth. Including animadversions on the CRUELITIES and MURDERS committed by CRIMPS and PRESS-GANGS. Delivered at the Lecture Room, Beaufort Buildings, Strand, September 16th, 1795.*

CITIZENS,

I Shall now resume, where I dropped it on Friday evening, the subject of the treatment of the *British soldiery*; and the tendency that treatment must inevitably have to diffuse a spirit of democracy through that rank of people from which the soldiery are taken.

There is an author, whom I have had frequently occasion to quote, not from any admiration of his morals, but because he seems to be the great text book of all the ministers of all the *regular and orderly* governments of *civilized* Europe. The name of this author is *Machiavel*; who, treating of the means by which the power of Princes is to be upheld, tells us that the two great requisites are "good laws and good arms." With respect to good laws, *Machiavel* does not say much: for, as he is instructing persons how they may become great despots, or the despotic ministers of great despots, he was more solicitous about arms than laws; and gives to understand, that "when-ever you can have good arms, there the laws, per force, must be good also"—that is; they must be of that description which nobody can very safely find fault with.

Citizens, this *Machiavel*, who I am inclined to think was rather disposed to satirize the system he pretends to uphold, enters at large into the mode by which good arms are to be procured and supported: and goes into a description of what are, and what are not good arms. In this part of his enquiry there are many

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things well worth the attention of the ministers of this or any other country; but which, upon that very account, perhaps, seem to be passed over in neglect. For instance, confederates, allies, auxiliaries, and mercenaries, he says, never can be good arms; good arms are those which are borne and exercised by the natives of the country, for the protection of which they are to be employed, and from them only can any considerable advantage be expected.

Upon this topic I have already enlarged to a considerable degree (Tribune No. 20 and 21.) I shall not, therefore, dwell upon it particularly at this time. It is more important that I should turn to another part of this discussion. There is one observation he makes which is particularly valuable.

*Machiavel* seems to have been very well convinced, that in order to have good arms, that is to say, to have an effective soldiery, able and *willing* to support your glory, and carry your projects into effect, numbers and discipline are not the only requisites; that you may have a very numerous army, and yet be very much disgraced and degraded;—that you may have a very well disciplined army, and yet the discipline of this army be fatal only to its employers; and he considers, therefore, that the great object of all is the attachment of the soldiery to the cause they are to support, and to the Prince whose glory they are to promote.

Citizens, we need not have raked the musty ashes of antiquity to have discovered a maxim so plain and self evident.

If we wish to be well protected by a gallant soldiery we must take care that our soldiery are zealously attached to our cause; and as the means to produce this effect, we must merit, by our treatment of them, the attachment of those whom we expect to shed their blood in our defence, and to run all dangers, perils, and hardships for the promotion of our happiness and our glory!

Now, how is this attachment to be secured? It is very evident, if we consider the situation of society at present, that attachment is not now to be obtained in that easy way in which it seems to have been acquired in former times. Feudal rights and feudal attachment have happily, in a great degree, been swept away; and we hear no more, except now and then from some superannuated bigot to the old system, of the duty and principle of inviolable

able attachment to the leader, upon whose estate you happened to be born; and by whom you have had the honour to be treated, ever since your birth, as a slave or beast of burden. The chieftains adhering to the Houses of *York* and *Lancaster* might indeed display their banners in the air, and be immediately followed by all their tenantry and vassals capable of bearing arms; and thus we might have host embattled against host, one half of the nation seeking the destruction of the other, with the most rancorous avidity, without either being capable of explaining the reason why they had drawn the falchion from its scabbard, and left their fields untilled, to make widows and orphans of their mourning wives and children.

Even in the time of *James* the first, a considerable degree of this superstitious veneration and attachment to certain families and individuals, merely on account of the high situation in which they were placed, seems to have remained; and we have instances in history of the most enormous fines, and even corporal punishments, chains and imprisonment being inflicted upon the base born plebian croud, for having insulted, by word or look, the sacred dignity of those who are decorated with stars and garters, and strut four or five times a year, perhaps, in an old red cloak, bedaubed with gold and ermine.

But the progress of enlightened intellect tended, in a considerable degree, to do away this ridiculous and foolish impression. We find it considerably weakened even at the period I have just been speaking of, and still more so before the end of that reign. In the revolution in 1649 every thing that remained of it was swept, at once, away. The superstitious veneration that had formerly been paid to birth and titles, fled before the sudden burst of reason, and was entirely destroyed. For a considerable time even the trappings and badges of this superstition were abolished: and though titles, rank, birth, and distinction, were afterwards *formally* revived at the restoration; yet there was no power in human caprice, nor human tyranny, to restore the servile adulation with which those circumstances were formerly contemplated by the people. My Lord and his Grace the Duke had been stripped of their gaudy titles, for a while—had been reduced to the plain humble level of citizens, and had been exhibited to mankind unsophisticated by the ornaments of a Court, and proved to be only of the same class and description of beings with those whom they had before looked down upon with  
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supercilious



supercilious insolence, and who had bowed down to their footstools with so much ill-placed veneration. This discovery having once been made, it was impossible for the people to get rid of the conviction that *Lords and Graces* and *Dukes* were nothing more than men: for as *Thomas Paine* has recently observed, in that treasonable and seditious book which I hope none of you have read, "it is impossible to compel a set of beings to unknow their knowledge or unthink their thoughts."

That this permanent effect was produced by the temporary revolution of 1649 seems to be universally acknowledged: at least, that the change has taken place is universally admitted; though I do not find that the change has ever yet been traced to its real cause. *Hume* himself, the advocate of approaching despotism, is obliged to acknowledge, in his essay on the British Government, that mankind are now no longer held in chains, by a superstitious veneration to mere forms and trappings; and he observes, that even those things, which, in former times, claimed the utmost veneration of mankind, seemed to sink into oblivion, from the persevering reason and enquiry that mankind have directed towards them. "Most people in this island," says he, "have divested themselves of all superstitious reverence to names and authority: The clergy have much lost their credit: Their pretensions and doctrines have been ridiculed; and even religion can scarce support itself in the world."

Well then, Citizens, this ancient foundation for the attachment of one class of people to another has been done away. Ill-placed veneration from accidental circumstances exists no more. Men beginning to venerate each other (to a certain degree, at least, though not quite so much as I could wish) on account of the good qualities they may possess, and the activity with which they may employ those good qualities for the welfare and happiness of mankind. How then are those persons in power and authority to command the attachment which was formerly bequeathed to them from the accidents of their birth. It is certainly necessary, some how or other, to secure the attachment of the people—No, pardon me; not of the *people*; but of the *large standing armies* by which the people, in case of necessity, may be dragoon'd, and to render them subservient to the will of those who created them.

There must be some means, I say, to attach this soldiery to the system they are hired to support: for it is not to be forgotten,

gotten, that the same power which is formidable to the oppressed, is, also, formidable to the oppressor himself; and that the *Janissaries*, who keep the poor trembling Turks in awe, sometimes hurl the haughty Sultan from his throne, and place the captain of their own banditti; or some other more favoured robber in his stead.

A standing army then, instead of being a defence, is in reality a great danger to the Prince or Minister who employs it; unless some particular means be devised by which the attachment of that army can be secured. What are the means by which this attachment is to be sought? Will the scanty pittance of *sixpence per day* attach any reasonable being to particular individuals, who, while swelling to inordinate wealth by their own pensions and places, still forget the soldier that bleeds in the field, or languishes in the camp, to promote their power and glory? Will punishment for reading and enquiry (instances of which I gave you on the former evening) attach a soldiery to the cause they are meant to support? On the contrary, will not the plainest capacity immediately perceive that they, who dread enquiry, have a lurking conviction at their hearts that they are wrong; and that the cause must be a bad one, which will totter to its foundation as soon as argument and enquiry are brought into the field to examine its merits or defects?

Punishment and hard treatment win not the affection of mankind: nor can stripes and blows, scanty fare and scanty pay, allure their attachment to those from whom they receive such treatment. It is only by honourable reward and encouragement, by raising the soul to a consciousness of its own strength and dignity, that the hearts of a generous race of men are to be won. If you will, therefore, reward, as you ought, the gallant heroes who fight your battles; if you will encourage, with proper subsistence and proper endearments, those who stand foremost for your defence—you will need no *crimps* to fill your armies—no *cat-of-nine-tails* to maintain discipline.

Thus might cruelty and severity be for ever banished; for, however pretended philosophers and the hired agents of corruption may attempt to deceive you, *it is not the nature of man to be supine*. When men are properly stimulated, by generous treatment, there is more danger that they should have too much activity and enthusiasm, than that they should be too backward to run the career of glory, or to vindicate the cause of their country. And, if we look through the annals of mankind,



mankind, we shall find, that wherever this generous treatment has been attended to, enthusiastic rashness, and not cowardice, has marked the character of those who were entrusted with the vindication of a nation's honor.

Citizens, I refer you to the affairs of *France* for proof of this. It was a common observation, before the revolution in that country, that *no nation produced better officers than the French*, but that *the common soldiery could never be kept to their duty*. But the common soldiery of *France*, were at that time, *a herd of military machines*, whose duty was to *protect the drivers of a race of slaves*. It was, therefore, that they felt no common cause, and no enthusiasm; while the officers, who were treated with particular marks of honour and distinction, displayed a gallantry of spirit, which, from the natural situation and many advantages of that country, must always distinguish its inhabitants; unless there be something superlatively iniquitous in its government counteracting the influence which those causes would otherwise produce.

See them now! Is it the soldiery of whom the convention of *France* have had any occasion to complain? Have they been slack and tardy in vindicating the honours and liberties of their country? No,—warmed with the cheering notes of **EQUALITY**, enraptured with the flattering conviction that *by being soldiers they did not lose the dignity of citizens*, breast deep in snow, they have marched to encounter the enemies of Gallic liberty, singing the songs of victory as they marched; and, if the accounts were true, with which we were pestered in the ministerial prints of the nakedness and forlorn condition of these troops, at the beginning of the war, we have indeed, reason to wonder at the effects of kind treatment—the *endearing rewards*, the “*honourable mention*,” and the like, which converted a race of men whom formerly we despised as slaves and cowards, into a generation of heroes, who thundered at *Jemappe*, and shook the tyrants of *Europe* on their distant thrones.

Citizens, it is not my business to disguise any part of the truth: and as *this country, according to its original constitution, is a popular government*—as the real constitution—that I mean which we are so proud of having been established by our ancestors, (*not Mr. Pitt's constitution of rotten boroughs!*) is, in fact, a democracy tempered and *seasoned* with a mixture of aristocracy, but which was never meant to be robbed of that popular nature which constitutes its nerve and energy, I shall not be afraid of spies when I say that this circumstance—this fair  
and

and honourable treatment of the soldiery has always particularly distinguished popular governments; and it is natural enough that the soldiery, having been convinced of this truth during their residence upon the continent, should have returned to this country, with a considerable seasoning of democratic spirit in their minds; and that instead of having crushed the hydra of popular government abroad, they had brought back an attachment to the revival of that government at home.

One might imagine, as it seems impossible for those who have the administration of the government to be blind to this—one might imagine that, even from common sense, even from the selfish design of supporting their own power, they would have thought of extending more kindness and liberality towards those whom they wish to be the supporters of their power. But this is very far from being the case: a variety of measures hitherto, at least in their present extent, never heard of in this country before, have been adopted, as if on purpose to disgust those men to whose support one would think, by other measures, they wished particularly to look.

But inconsistency is never to be wondered at among selfish individuals; there is but one source of consistency; and that is the pure generous spirit of benevolence, the animating love of all mankind, which directs us to promote the general interest, and lose sight of the particular. Men warmed by such a sentiment may preserve a steady consistency; because they act from reason; from deep felt conviction; from serious meditation and a settled plan. But they who seek only their own power, grandeur and emolument, are always inconsistent, because the passions which are their sole guides are ever capricious and inconstant; and that which may gratify one pursuit of ambition or vanity, may be hostile to another, on which in another hour perhaps they would fix their attention with still more steadiness and avidity. Nay, perhaps, having been so long in the habit of politically governing mankind by faction, division, and dissention—keeping up to the old maxim “divide and conquer,” it may have become, as it were, a systematic part of their existence, so that they cannot help acting upon it: so that they proceed, in fact, instinctively.—or as Shakespeare would express it, by “a divine thrusting on” on the principle of division, and are hence disposed to *keep a divided army in awe*, rather than to seek its unanimous love and affection, by generous treatment, integrity, and honest liberality.

But



But it may be said that, in one paltry expedient at least, this latter object seems to have been had in view: namely, the late curious order issued—I will not say in violation of the Constitution of this country, because it came from very illustrious authority; and, as I am known to bow down with great respect to authorities of this description, I shall not fully my own consistency by saying any thing so harsh—But I will say, that I never heard of the individual who pretended to point out the statute, or maxim of the Constitution, which authorised such an order to be issued and executed, without consent of King, Lords, and Commons in Parliament assembled. But perhaps it may be affirmed, by those who support this measure, that there was no necessity to consult the Commons, till it could be found out in what House of Parliament the *Commons* did, in reality, assemble.

You may perceive that I allude to the order for letting the soldiery have bread and meat at a cheaper price than other Citizens had. But how could they be so ignorant of mankind as to suppose that so shallow an artifice would escape instantaneous detection? Could they suppose that because a man might put off a coat of one colour and put on one of another, that he thereby put off common sense? Or could they suppose, that when they had decorated a man in a blue or a scarlet coat, that he would put off the feelings of humanity, and refuse to sympathize with a brother or a friend, languishing in the want and misery, which a profligate and ruinous war had brought upon the country? Or could they suppose either that the soldiery would not perceive the view with which this order was issued?

But, Citizens, it is plain and evident, that an individual practice like this cannot wipe from the mind deep impression, produced by general conduct: and as soldiers have been lately in the habit of reading, and as I have given you the instances of some who have been threatened with the black hole and bread and water, and of others who have been sent to the Continent on the forlorn hope, and others in *Scotland*, that have been fastened with fetters and chains against the wall, kept upon bread and water and punished with 400 lashes, because they would not *damn the friends of the people*—As all these circumstances have taken place on account of the soldiers having the wicked and seditious presumption to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest; and as it is also true that there has been a certain rage, of late, for publishing small books (cheap, democratic, sans-culottish editions;)

tions;)—and as aristocratic works are sent into the world in this form—and of all things in the world, to make men democrats, there are none like aristocratic publications!—If people will but read, no matter what, whether it is *Jack the Giant Killer*, *Tom Thumb the Great*, or *Burke's Reflections*, or any other silly and mad publication, I know where reading and thought must convey them; and the more aristocratic the books they read, the sooner they will get to their point: that is to say, provided they do not only read, but, to express myself in true orthodox phraseology, also, mark, learn and inwardly digest, as they go on!

Now, Citizens, as soldiers will sometimes read—and as it is probable that some impression of this book, called *Hume's History of England*, may have fallen into some soldier's hand, it is probable that, in consequence of this, he may have picked out some facts which may have inclined him to meditate a little upon the circumstances under which he is placed. Recollecting what his pay is at this time, and finding what it was in Queen Elizabeth's days, (I gave you a history of the price of provisions in those days in the last season) when a good fat pig was bought for 4d. a hen for 2d. and a good fat capon for 3d. a chicken for a penny, &c. [*Tribune No. XVI. p. 6.*]—Finding that in Q. Bess's days, such being the price of provisions, a common soldier received 8d. a day as his pay, which was the price of two fat pigs, he may be inclined to say to himself, how comes it that I do not receive the price of two fat pigs for being shot at now, as I should have had if I had been shot at in the time of that old fashioned Queen?

Citizens, this fact is contained in a note, so exceedingly curious and apropos, that I shall read it to you, both for your amusement and instruction: and that you may see that I am not imposing upon you. In the eighth volume of *Hume's History of England*, page 336, you will find it thus written: “It is curious to observe that the Minister, in the war begun in 1754,”—O what would he have said if he had witnessed the war begun in 1793!—“that the Minister, in the war begun in 1754, was in some periods allowed to lavish, in two months, as great a sum as was granted by Parliament to Queen Elizabeth in forty-five years.” But, Citizens, the Minister in 1754 was a novice, the present Minister will lavish you much more in two hours! Hume proceeds; “the extreme frivolous object of the late war, and the great importance of her's, set this matter in a still stronger light. Money too, we may observe, was in most particulars of  
No. XXVII. p p “the



"the same value in both periods." That is to say, the current coin of the kingdom was of the same weight and standard of metal. "She paid 8d. a day to every foot soldier. But our late delusions have much exceeded any thing known in history, not even excepting those of the crusades. For I suppose there is no mathematical, still less an arithmetical demonstration, that the road to the Holy Land was not the road to Paradise; but there is that the endless increase of national debt is the direct road to national ruin."

Such, Citizens, is the fact relative to the pay of the soldiery in the time of Queen *Elizabeth*; and such are the reflections of an aristocratic writer when he notices that fact. But, if you please, we will make a little bit of an Irish progress, and go on a little way further back. Having given a specimen from the time of Queen *Elizabeth*, I will now give you another from the time of *Edward III.* You will find that, even in the days of good Queen *Bess*, there was some degree of abatement in the comforts and enjoyments of life to be reaped by the soldier, who fought the battles of his country, and endured hardships to protect the enjoyments and comforts of all the rest: for we find that, in the time of *Edward III.* (*Hume*, vol. 3, *Cadell's small edition*, page 377) an estimate of the different pay given to a soldier and to a common labourer, it not having been then perceived, that a man ought to receive less emolument for being shot at, than for being employed in the field. "A reaper, in the first week of August, was not allowed above two-pence a day, or near 6d. of our present money;" that is, in the time of *Edward III.* one shilling weighed as much as three do now. For you must always keep in your eye, when you are making a comparison of ancient and present times, that the pound weight of silver was originally coined into 20s. which is the reason why we now call 20s. a pound; and that it gradually altered from that standard till the time of *Elizabeth*, when it assumed the standard that it now bears. Do not forget either that this two-pence, which, in point of metal, was equal to our sixpence, would buy as much corn, meat and ale, as can now be bought for 3s. 6d. or 4s.—"A reaper, in the first week of *August*, was not allowed above two-pence a day; in the second week a third more. A master carpenter was limited through the whole year to threepence a day; a common carpenter to twopence, money of that age. It is remarkable that, in the same reign, the pay of a common soldier, an archer, was 6d. a day"—which, by the change

change both in denomination and value, would be equivalent to 10s. or 12s. of our present money. This was something like being a soldier—two or three campaigns made a man's fortune; and if he escaped the first brush or two, he might leave off trade, and retire upon the profits to enjoy *otium cum dignitate*: and yet, strange to say, a war could then be carried on for an hundredth part of the present expence. But you will remember, there were not then so many great ministers and agents—Chancellors of the Exchequer, Lords of the Treasury, Lords of the Admiralty, Clerks of the Treasury, Lords of Trade—Lords Commissioners—Auditors, and a long string of &c. &c. &c. &c. &c.'s. that would tire my patience to repeat, and your's to hear. And as they had not to pay thousands to so many persons who did *nothing at all*—they were better able to pay a good price to those who were to do the whole.

Now, Citizens, it may perhaps happen that these circumstances may not be quite unknown in the country; since they have got in circulation in no less than three different editions of this size, besides several others; and such facts, if known, are not very well calculated to endear to the soldiery the present Boroughmongering system.

But administration seems to have forgotten what the character of a soldier is. And how should it be otherwise? There was a time when Statesmen were *heroes*, not *cabinet intriguers*. There was a time when he who thought he had a right to plunge a nation into war, and send millions to slaughter, thought he had no right to stay at home, and enjoy the honors and profits of the struggle, in security—ignorant of the temper as of the *sufferings* of those by whom it was maintained. This being the case, they were then enabled to discover, that a soldier has a certain jealous feeling about him, called his *honour*, which one of our ancient poets calls “the moral conscience of the brave.” But the present men do not seem to know that *honour is the soldier's religion*; and that he who behaves to them like a swindler, degrades himself before them, and meets with their sovereign contempt. Not recollecting this, we find that they have dared to rouse the fiery indignation of the British soldiery, by tricks and artifices, at which common honesty and common humanity recoil. By these tricks they have carried on, by wholesale, the detestable practice of crimping; for which some inferior agents have been so long famous in the retail way. I allude,



Citizens, to the circumstances of the enlistment and subsequent treatment of the *fencible corps*.

If I am not very much mistaken, while the bill for raising these corps was before the *House of Commons*, an amendment was made by *Sheridan*, and at length adopted, that they should not be sent out of the country. But, whether this clause was actually inserted in the act or not, certain it is we have proof, that under these terms and conditions, many, if not all, the fencible corps were raised. Yet what has been the consequence? Has this agreement been abided by? Have Ministers had the precaution even to keep their faith and honour with the instruments to which they look up for the support of their own power and grandeur? No, I shall not particularly notice, on the present occasion, the practice of sending *English fencibles* to *Ireland*, and *Irish fencibles* to *England*, or bringing *Scotch fencibles* to this side of the *Tweed*, or sending English to the other, because I hope and trust, from the enlightened spirit that has gone abroad among us, that we are fast approaching to the important conviction that *English, Scotch and Irish are one, bound by one tie of interest and affection to love, support and stand by each other, as sworn and reciprocal friends*, who must mount up together to the renovation of their liberties and privileges, or, should one be struk down, must tumble all at once into the abyss of ruin and destruction.

But there are other circumstances to which I must allude more particularly. We can none of us have forgotten the mutinies and disturbances which have unfortunately taken place, in various parts of the country. We none of us, I trust, have reflected without horror upon those threatening scenes of terror which began to open before us; and there is none, I hope, among us who would not join heart and hand, to remove for ever the causes of such dangerous dissensions, and prevent such terrible events as must exist if ever that military, united for our defence, should turn their swords against each other, or level them at the breasts of their fellow citizens, and extort their own terms from an affrighted nation. Let us not, however, be afraid to mention facts. Let us not shrink from the unpleasing but necessary recollection of scenes that have so lately passed. We cannot forget that a regiment of these fencibles, at *Bristol*, were recently ordered to be embarked for *Jersey* and *Guernsey*; and that finding their officers were not to go with them, they considered themselves

themselves crimped, trepanned and sold. They took that opportunity, also, of complaining, not only that having been enlisted under pretence of serving only in a particular country, they were now about to be transported into another, but that they had not received the whole of the bounty upon promise of which they were at first enlisted; upon these grounds, therefore, they refused to go. The event is well known. They were remonstrated with; they were promised their bounty as soon as they should get on board;—they had been *promised* before! but what are promises to those who have not the power to enforce them?—They refused to *quit* the country whose shores they had enlisted to *defend*. Force was employed against them; they formed themselves in resolute phalanx, and *Bristol* was upon the eve of witnessing the horrors of military rebellion, when, finding themselves surrounded by superior numbers, they submitted, were driven on board the transports, and their ring-leaders seized to be tried as mutineers; and it is added, the bounty of which they had been defrauded has never been paid: the pretence being, that the terms upon which this tardy act of justice had been offered had not been accepted by them in time. Whether this last part of the story is true or not I do not undertake absolutely to affirm. There are certain circumstances which, as it is scarcely possible to get to the bottom of them, we must take upon such probable evidence as we can obtain; and all that can be expected of us is, that we do not affirm with greater confidence than we have good reason to believe.

At *Exeter* a similar circumstance took place, in a regiment raised by Lord *Cunningham*, and composed almost entirely of his vassals. These men were entered at a bounty of eight guineas per man, the whole of which had not, it seems, been paid: and part of the terms as they represent it, were, that they should not be sent out of the country; and that they should serve no longer than till the conclusion of the war. They, however, were ordered to the *West Indies*;—that is, they were ordered to be drafted into the 43d regiment, which was bound to the *West Indies*: and which was under no sort of engagement to be disbanded at the return of peace: and it is affirmed that they were, in fact, *sold* by certain of their officers to that regiment, for fifteen guineas per man. They having been raised at eight, a dead profit of seven guineas per head was thus to be gained by those upright men, who, considering that these poor soldiers were of the swinish multitude, might thus be said to have “brought their hogs to a  
“fine



"fine market," They also refused to be drafted, insisting upon the fulfilment of their contract. But litigations of this sort are settled in a shorter way than by suits in Chancery. They were drafted at the mouth of the cannon; and compelled to quit the regiment to which, under certain conditions, they had joined themselves, and enter into another bound by no conditions of a similar nature.

Shall we dwell any longer upon these scenes? Shall we look to *Ireland*, where regiments ordered to the West Indies, considering that they were only going to a certain grave, were also compelled (contrary it is said to express stipulations) to embark, by the terror of immediate military execution; while, at the same time, we are told that the officers were silenced by a profitable compromise. They being *gentlemen*, were to be treated in "another guess sort of a way:" they were to be permitted to retire with *full pay*. Thus is the character of British officers to be degraded to that of common Crimps, who trepan and sell their fellow men for despicable lucre and sinecure commission!

Citizens, we are told, in a ministerial paper of to day, (for what is it that ministerial papers will not tell us?)—we are told in a very peremptory tone, in that famous oracle of ministerial wisdom, "the Times," that the story about trepanning the fencibles is nothing but a *Jacobinical fable*, invented by a parcel of *incendiaries*, to draw men from the paths of duty and foment commotion. But what do these ministerial oracles say to the letter of Col. Hay upon this subject? Is the Colonel one of these Jacobins who are hired to disseminate these perjuries and falsehoods? Is Colonel Hay, whose letter has been published in almost all the papers, and who expressly declares that, having an assurance from those from whom he received his commission, that the men should not be sent out of the country, he raised his men upon those terms, and made that express agreement with them; and that he considers it a violation, both of his honour and the honour of his employers, that this compact should be violated, and the men compulsively drafted into other regiments, which have not the advantage of any such terms in their favour.

Citizens, Citizens, are these men serious when they tell us they mean to support the present system? Do they wish we should reverence this ARISTOCRACY, which they say it is treason to defame? Do they wish that we should peaceably submit to this *Oligarchy* of Borough-mongers, which  
has

has usurped the government, and stripped both the King and people of their rights? If they do, methinks their means are ill adapted to their end! for I do not see how it is possible that even the very instruments of their power should feel themselves thus treated by the leaders and supporters of *aristocracy*, and not be induced to entertain strong feelings of detestation and abhorrence against a system, under which they can be treated with such bare faced violation of every compact and engagement, and every tie of good faith and amity:—nor how it is possible for them not to wish for the restoration of that *democracy* which, were it re-established, would render it impossible for ministers to practice, with impunity, artifices so base; or to degrade the national character, by such a violation of every duty towards those who are the hope and defence of the country.

But, Citizens, we have not yet approached the climax. We have yet to animadvert upon a set of beings, at whose name nature shrinks with abhorrence! a set of beings who bear the form and semblance of man, but who, like cannibals, prey upon human flesh, or revel at the banquets of low debauchery, amongst the groans and anguish of those whom they trepan and destroy. You will perceive that I am speaking of Crimps and Press-gangs—who have reduced the art of man-stealing to a science, and established their posts and stations in different parts of the country, from which, I suppose, we shall by and by have intelligence carried by new invented telegraphs, that their system may be conducted with the greater security.

I believe I should not be unauthorised, if I were to affirm, that immense fortunes are made by this infamous trade. I will not dwell, however, upon many particulars, nor name to you what Captains went to what crimping house, and told the Crimp Majors that they wanted ten men, and would give a hundred guineas for them; neither will I detail the commercial haggling that took place for the other fifty. Circumstances of this kind have been so repeatedly brought before the public, and with such strong and convincing proofs, (proofs marked in blood! proofs echoed in sighs of anguish to your ears!) that I need not occupy your time by much detail.

But remember, Citizens, these dungeons of crimping-houses could not exist—this practice of man-stealing could not be carried on, if there were not police officers in league with the wretches who commit these depredations—if the course of justice were fairly administered; if our magistrates  
were



were fairly appointed, as by the ancient spirit of our Constitution they ought to be:—if, instead of being the creatures, tools, and sometimes, perhaps, the panders of great men and officers of state, they were men whose situations were conferred upon them merely by the confidence and respect of their fellow citizens. Practices of this kind cannot be conducted without official accomplices; and accordingly we find enquiry repeatedly crushed by the specious pretence, *the King must have soldiers.*

The King must have *soldiers*!—but must the King have *slaves*? for those who are stolen, seduced, or trappan in the hour of drunkenness, are not soldiers but *slaves*!

Unfortunately, from the growth of corruption, from the immense volumes in which our laws are written—volumes which scarcely any human industry can toil through in a whole life—from the immense expence with which *justice is to be purchased by English freemen*! it is impossible for the poor and the ignorant to receive the benefit of those laws: and emboldened by this circumstance, with such audacity does this trade of man-stealing stalk along our streets, that even persons in what are aristocratically called *respectable situations*—even those whom all mankind considered as having some claims to humanity, are sometimes its victims.

I might refer you, for a fact of a very suspicious nature, to Mr. *Walker*, a bookseller in this town, whose son (a solid and respectable young man of 19) has been missing these five or six months—no one knowing what is become of him: a young man as little likely to have quitted his family or friends, on any vagrant project, as any person in the metropolis. Instances of this sort are numerous indeed, and many similar circumstances have come to my ears which I shall not take up your time by stating to you.

But there is another story circumstantially told me, by persons ready to support the truth of it, which I shall not pass over in silence. The partner in a very considerable mustard manufactory, in the Borough, was taken by force and violence upon one of the bridges, by a party of *kidnappers and crimps*, who evidently knew him, and called him by his name, and when, alarmed by their abrupt greeting, he denied that he was the man, they felt for a large ring that he wore, and, upon finding it, exclaimed, yes, but you are the man, for here is the ring; with which they accordingly made free. They then seized him, dragged him to a boat, and carried him to Chatham; from whence he escaped from the simple circumstance

circumstance of a person accidentally recognizing him, and explaining who and what he was. But if he had been a poor man (no matter how honest and virtuous) what would it have availed who had seen, or who had known him?

From this circumstance, Citizens, I turn to the lad, whom on *Friday* last I produced in this Tribune. The aunt of this lad, I should inform you, having seen my posting bills, called on Thursday morning to relate the facts; and the person who answered the door, not knowing that I was above in my study, said I was not at home. The aunt accordingly left word that she called to tell me some circumstances about her boy, who had been crimped; and whom she was ready to bring to me, that he might be produced in this place if I thought proper—that the public might see what sort of a lad had been so practised upon. She was to come again on the Friday morning; which, however, she did not: but about the middle of the day a person came from her, and told me the story in a more particular manner: bringing, at the same time, the newspaper in which, during his absence, he had been advertised, and the hand-bill which had been cried in Bartholomew Fair; to which he afterwards added the letter, written by the lad from Northampton to his aunt, who had protected him, from his infancy—he having lost both his father *before* his birth; and his mother a few weeks *after*: These circumstances, he told me, he would bring the aunt and the boy to state to me; and in the evening they came accordingly. The boy told his story in a very plain and direct manner, stating that he went out from his aunt's house; with intention of going to school, but that it being a little before six o'clock, he took a walk in the Park till the school should open. While thus sauntering about, two soldiers came up to him, "My lad," said one of them, "you look melancholy." "It may be so," said the lad, "but you would not be melancholy," replied the crimp, "if you were a soldier. We who serve his Majesty, have plenty of money, and plenty of good liquor; and are as happy as can be. I will give you five guineas now, if you will enlist; and five more when you have enlisted." "I will see your money at the devil first," said the boy. But he was immediately seized by the other, who was behind him; and who put a gag in his mouth, and took him in a coach to some house, he knew not where; confined him in a dark cellar; and in the night took him off, together with two



other boys, upon the road, as he was informed, towards *Manchester*.

The boy relates many curious adventures upon this journey in a very circumstantial manner; and very particularly describes the manner in which he found means, after he was locked up alone in a two pair of stairs room, at a public house out of the high road, where they stopped, by the assistance of his bed cord, to let himself down from the window, and make his escape. He then enquiring of the first person he met, his way into the high road for *London*, was directed to *Northampton*; whence he wrote a letter to his aunt, containing a rude statement of the foregoing facts; and his aunt accordingly went down immediately to fetch him. It was impossible I should have any objection to state facts like these, but, at the same time, it was necessary for me to guard against the possibility of deception; and to be cautious that I did not pledge myself to a story, however plausible, before I had sifted it to the very bottom. I therefore only noticed it in general terms on Friday, and adjourned the more ample statement to this evening. In the mean time I got a friend to go to the schoolmaster, in the first instance, from whom I learn that the boy had been absent, in the manner stated; and that he, for his part, believed the boy's story to be true; that he had a high opinion of the veracity of the aunt; and that he did not believe there was any sort of trick in it. I then got this same friend to write to *Northampton*, to know whether any such had ever been there, and what was the story he had told. The answer was, that he had been there; and the story he told, to the poor woman who protected him, corresponds with what I have already related. Still, however, I deemed it necessary to make further enquiries; and I proposed to the aunt that she should appoint two housekeepers whom she knew, and that I should appoint two that I knew; and that they should cross-examine the boy; and if to them there appeared satisfactory evidence of the truth of the story, that then affidavits should be drawn up for the boy and herself, and that they should go before a magistrate, and offer to make oath of the facts. This appeared to me the best way to avoid all possibility of deception: and, at the same time, as a part of the complaint made to me was, that the magistrates were unwilling to assist in searching the crimping-houses, &c. I conceived, that perhaps they would not be very ready to administer the oath proposed; and that if this should be the case, these

these preliminary enquiries and precautions would make the appeal to the public so much the stronger, and expose the connivance in these infamous transactions the more completely. But with this proposal the aunt refused to comply; observing that she was an Officer's widow, and was dependent, and that she would not fly in the face of Government. I therefore chose to drop all further concern in the affair; and she immediately went to the magistrate (as I have since learned) and offered to make oath of the facts. The magistrate, however, as I foresaw, refused to administer the oath, and expressed no small degree of indignation at her having been with me upon such a business.

Such then, Citizens, are the circumstances of this story, which it appears to me demands most serious investigation: and which, I hope, some Citizen will endeavour to probe to the bottom. If it is true, it is a truth so monstrous, and so alarming to every one, whose heart is alive to parental feeling, as scarcely any instance in the records of human infamy can equal.

Not to dwell, however, upon a story relative to which even the very shadow of a doubt can remain, I shall conclude this lecture with a melancholy circumstance that took place at *Poole*. I shall not go very fully into the affair at present, because from persons in that part of the country I have promises that I can depend upon, of authentic and full particulars of the transaction; and the general heads of it have been some time ago stated in the public papers.

The circumstances are briefly thus—A vessel coming into the port of *Poole*, with only a few hands on board, perceiving itself likely to be boarded by a press-gang, (a banditti of wretches who though well known in this country for their open atrocities, have no sort of legal right or pretence for the depredations they commit on individual security;) the crew, determined to defend themselves: but the master of the press-gang boarded the vessel, and, by the assistance of some soldiers whom he found means to compel, reluctantly, to assist his project, he succeeded in reducing the unfortunate crew; having shot three of the men who had the audacity to defend themselves. Two of them may perhaps be considered as having fallen in the struggle; but the fate of the third can bear no softer name than deliberate murder. The instance I allude to was the *Midshipman*, who, perceiving his companions and friends fall beneath the ferocious rage of these cannibals, bared his bosom, and exclaimed, "you have mur-



"dered my companions, murder me also." The Russian Lieutenant took him at his word; levelled the pistol at his breast, and shot him dead.

The whole of this affair, and the disgraceful facts which followed, will soon, I hope, be submitted to the public. Suffice it to say, for the present, that the enraged populace, and particularly the relatives of the murdered seamen and passengers, fell upon the press-gang with great fury, and threatened to tear them to pieces. They were rescued, however, and carried to gaol, under pretence of being committed for trial: but when the day of trial came, the principal witnesses, who were some soldiers quartered in the town, were found to have been marched off in the dead of the night: and thus was the course of justice perverted. But the tale of horror does not stop here. The inhabitants of *Poole* affirm, and I have seen very respectable persons who support the affirmation, that the three men who were the principal perpetrators of these murders, by the abuse of ministerial or some other corruption, by the poison that has been poured into that ear which ought to be closed to every whisper but of justice and truth—these men—Shall I call them *men*? these tygers in human shape have been appointed to places, and rewarded with pensions!!!

What, Citizens, is this the law and justice we wish to maintain?—Is this our liberty?—Is this our Constitution? Where is the audacious Minister? Where is the wretched tool of party that can dare to stand up (armed as he may be with all the terrors of perverted law, or military domination)—where is the wretch that dare to stand up and tell me that this is the law or constitution of this country—that these are the objects for which the prerogative of mercy was lodged in royal hands—or that it is for this Britons ought to expend their treasures and exhaust their blood!

Unhappy Britons! why do you rear with fond solicitude the offspring of your loves?—why do ye toil to improve the fertility of the soil, or the excellency of your manufactures?—why do ye plough the dangerous billow, to enrich your country with the fruits of other climes? Alas! alas! and is it all for this—that the press-gang, the crimp, the kidnapper may tear the hopeful or industrious youth from the bosom of his friends and relatives? or having slaughtered the innocent and useful member of society, may exult in the rewards of violence, and be crowned with commemorating honours,

as the ancient Romans were, not when they had destroyed, but when they had saved the lives of their fellow citizens?

We have talked of *requisitions* in France, but what is a French requisition when compared with this? The requisition of France was instituted to compel all ranks and orders of society to take their share in the common danger—to compel the wealthiest citizen to encounter the same hazard as the poorest: which, according to my conception, is most impartial justice. For why should the paltry pittance of a man wallowing in wealth and luxury, be put in competition with my life, because forsooth I have not learned his thriving arts? Why should the wealthy merchant—the ermined Peer—the over pampered parasite of ministerial corruption, remain in indolent security at home, while the peasant quits his plough, or the artificer his loom, to shed his blood in defence of those who disdain to share the common danger? Why should the plain common man be doomed not only to an untimely grave, but leave also a helpless family to beggary and distress, while the rich man reposes in the couch of luxury, amuses himself with the narrative of exploits performed at the expence of the blood of those whom Nature made his equals, and habit has rendered more useful to society than himself?

Nay, according to their own doctrines, the rich, and the rich alone, ought to be sent to fight the battles of any country. They impudently tell us, when we talk of rights, that we can have no rights because we have nothing to lose. If we have nothing to lose, we can have nothing to defend; and I do not know why we should spend *our* blood in defending the possessions and enjoyments of others, who care so little for us, and repay us only with contempt. Instead of soothing us, instead of encouraging us in this unequal warfare, where we stake every thing and have nothing to gain; instead of this, the very reverse is the picture of their conduct, and the poor common soldier either dies in the ranks, or is consigned to a workhouse or an hospital, to brood over his wounds and services: and what adds to these aggravations and insults, the bond of plighted faith is broken with the soldier, enlisted for his country's defence, and military commissions, once the rewards of patriot services, are little other than patents of impunity for man stealing and the traffic of human blood.

What blind infatuation has seized upon the minds of our governors. Why talk we of Jacobinism? Who are such rank Jacobins as the administration conducting our present affairs? Why talk we of anarchy? Who are the organizers  
of



of anarchy but Pitt, Dundas, and their subaltern coadjutors? Why talk we of the British constitution? It no longer exists. Those who pretend to idolize it have pulled it down! and even the ill constructed cumbrous pile of oligarchy which faction has raised in its place, those who are most interested in supporting it, seem emulous to destroy; and like Sampson of old, to bury themselves in the ruins of an edifice which they are no longer capable of supporting.

### RIGHTS OF BRITONS.

In No. XXIV. I inserted, from the *Critical Review*, an article noticing my "*Natural and Constitutional Right of Britons to Annual Parliaments, universal Suffrage, and the Freedom of Popular Association*," &c.—Since that time the following article has appeared in another literary journal.

MONTHLY REVIEW, Sept. 1795, p. 103, Art. 43—  
*The Natural and Constitutional Right, &c.*

"IT is the unquestionable Right of free-born Britons, when legally accused of any crime, to be heard in their own defence:—but experience has fully proved that it is more advantageous to the party accused, as well as more eligible for the public, that his defence shall be made by proxy, than in his own proper person. Weighty reasons might be assigned for this;—even in the case in which the person, against whom the charge is brought, possesses talents which might well enable him to become his own advocate. Notwithstanding Mr. Thelwall's eloquence, improved by a habit of public speaking, we apprehend he has no reason to complain that his cause was transferred from his own hands to those of the able and upright pleaders who so eminently distinguished themselves, on the part of the prisoners, in the late state-trials for high treason. Perhaps, too, the public may be of opinion that, after the full report which has been given of their pleadings, and of the whole process of the trials, it is not probable that much important matter respecting these prosecutions can yet remain to be disclosed. Mr. Thelwall, however, thinks it right, after his honourable acquittal, again to present himself before the bar of the public in his own person, by publishing the speech which he intended to have delivered on his trial; and his Vindication will be found to exhibit

exhibit many things, respecting both the general cause and individual case of Mr. Thelwall, with a degree of force and energy which, while it displays in a favourable light the writer's oratorical talents, may serve to establish in the public mind the fullest conviction of the equity of the verdicts in question, and of their importance to the preservation of public freedom. Circumstanced as Mr. T. has been, it is not to be expected that, with his ardour of temper and command of language, he should be capable of writing without some portion of acrimony. The work, however, not only has considerable merit as a political oration, but states, with great strength of argument, several important points in which British freedom is essentially interested;—particularly the question concerning Parliamentary Reform."

### FAREWELL TO THE YEAR 1794.

(From WHITCHURCH'S *Poetical Pieces*.)

THOU long—long year of Massacre—farewell!

With horror I retrace thy bloody reign:

For, ah! of war's sad victims who can tell

The countless myriads in thy circle slain?

Pregnant with human ills of every name,

And all the plagues that desolate the earth;

I saw thee rise in War's destructive flame,

And pensive mark'd thy inauspicious birth.

Oh! stain'd with foulest crimes thy every hour!

Thy reign a register of blood appears,

In which the "Dogs of War" did much devour,

More savage far than in preceding years.

Too much of this, the rapid *Rhine*, the *Meuse*,

The *Scheldt*, the *Sambre*, and the deep *Moselle*,

Can blushing prove, whilst human blood profuse,

Their banks empurple, and their waters swell.

Too much of this, the *Alps*, the *Pyrennees*,

*Columbia's Isles*, and *Northern Lands*, have found;

For *torrid Zones*, *rough Seas*, and *Climes that freeze*,

Have heard alike the *Battle's Thunder* sound.

Too much of this was *Poland* made to feel,

'Gainst *Royal Robbers* forc'd in arms to rise;

For, ah! beneath the barb'rous *Cossack's* steel

Her valiant *Kosciusko* bleeding lies!

Illustrious



Illustrious Chief!—*sure 'tis no treason here*;  
 To pay an heart-felt tribute to thy worth;  
 O'er suff'ring Liberty to drop a tear,  
*And curse the bloody Tygress of the North.*

Lo! *Ismael's*\* brutal Conqueror, from afar,  
 Leads on his myrmidons in scent of prey;  
 Train'd up to all the cruelties of war,  
 To age, to sex, they no distinction pay!

Ill-fated *Praga*† yielded to their rage;  
 And, oh! the massacre that there ensu'd—  
 In blood of blooming youth, and hoary age,  
 Their savage hands were wickedly imbru'd!

In vain the Mother's prayer—the Infant's cry—  
 Nor prayers, nor tears, could move the furious band:  
 Beneath the sword ALL undistinguish'd die,  
 For thus the FIEND SUWARROW gave command!

At length thy reign, thou year of blood, is o'er;  
 And pleas'd my Muse shall sound thy parting knell:  
 Oh! could she still as soon the cannon's roar,  
 And bid with thee the pomp of war farewell!

\* *Ismael* is a place of considerable strength in European Turkey, situated on the Danube, at no great distance from the Black Sea.—It was taken by storm on the 22d December, 1793, and the Turkish garrison, who so nobly defended it, and whose bravery merited a better fate, were massacred, *in cold blood*, to the amount of upwards of thirty thousand men, by the command of that trusty servant of the *amiable* CATHERINE, the renowned GENERAL SUWARROW.—The town was given up to the unrestrained fury of the Russian soldiery; and the most horrid outrages were perpetrated on the defenceless inhabitants by that hord of savages, who took upwards of three days and nights to complete their work of cruelty and blood!

† Of the storming of this place by the Russian monsters, and the horrible massacre that ensued, some of the newspapers gave the following tragical account: "The suburbs of *Praga*, separated from *Warsaw* by the *Vistula*, was defended by more than a hundred cannon, disposed upon thirty-three batteries. It was under the fire of this terrible artillery, that GENERAL SUWARROW made his troops mount to the assault, in the same manner as he had done at the taking of *Ismael*, where the Russians entered only by climbing over the dead bodies of their comrades, as well as their enemies. The General gave the same orders in the assault of the suburbs of *Praga*: he enjoined the soldiers to give quarter to no one. The engagement lasted two hours; and this memorable day, the 4th of November, 1794, will be numbered among those in which human blood was shed in most abundance, even in these unhappy times in which we live. The number of unfortunate Poles who perished by the sword, the fire, and the water, (the bridge over the *Vistula* having been broken during the action,) are estimated at *Twenty Thousand*!—In the suburbs of *Praga*, *Twelve Thousand* inhabitants, of both sexes, and all ages, were the victims of the first fury of the Russians, who massacred all whom they met, without distinction of age, sex, or quality!"

## THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XXVIII.

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*Report on the STATE OF POPULAR OPINION, and Causes of the Increase of DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. Part the Fifth. Including Sketches of the affairs of SCOTLAND and IRELAND, with a History of the Progress of DEFENDERISM, and Reflections on the Fate and Deportment of O'CONNOR. Delivered at the Lecture Room, Beaufort Buildings, Strand, September 18th, 1795.*

### CITIZENS,

IF the state of opinion in England is not very flattering to the champions of aristocracy, let us consider whether, by turning their eyes towards *Scotland* and *Ireland*, they will find much more reason for consolation and satisfaction. Let us consider what is the state of the public mind there: and let us keep it constantly in remembrance, that we ought to be equally anxious about every part of the opinions of every part of the nation, and that we ought to be equally desirous of promoting the peace, happiness, and prosperity of all the *three divisions*, as they have hitherto been considered, but as I would say the *three integral parts*, of a state, which I should wish to see to the end of time one and indivisible, in sentiments, wishes, and in exertions.

With respect to *Scotland*, we cannot but be aware that there a disposition to dissatisfaction, and that a very strong bias, indeed, towards immediate and thorough reform has been manifested, even before it displayed itself with equal strength in this part of the nation. We cannot but be aware that the principles of liberty are there very widely diffused; and that a considerable degree of indignation and anger still boils in the breasts of Scotchmen, on account of the abject situation in which they are held by corruption, and the slavery imposed upon them by *royal Burghs* and other rotten corporations, by



which their rights are extinguished and their suffrages monopolized.

It is very true, Citizens, that from the unfortunate circumstance of *Scotland* being a country where there are no laws, an inquisition has been established, in that part of the country more successfully than Mr. *Reeves*, and his honourable associates, have been enabled to establish here.—I say from *Scotland* being a country where there are no laws: for when Judges from the Bench shall declare, as the Judges of the *Court of Justiciary* have declared, that an opinion delivered by the Privy Council is binding upon the consciences of Judges, because undoubtedly some of the Judges of the country were Members of that Privy Council—I say when opinions like these are delivered, which, in other words, is asserting that the Judges have a right to make whatever laws it is convenient for them to execute, then the state of the people, as to any hope of legal redress, as to any hope of public virtue and justice, is absolutely that of having no laws at all. Nay, I speak too favourably: they are in a condition much worse than if they had no laws at all: for to have laws to punish, but none to redress, to have laws to crush, but none to protect, to have laws that can trample us into the dust; that can subjugate us to a tyrannous aristocracy, and no laws to obtain a redress against the usurpations of that aristocracy, is a state infinitely worse than that of savages who run wild in the woods, and seek for protection only from their own strong arm.

In consequence then of the modes of proceeding in the Courts of Justiciary, in consequence of the *public prosecutor* being able to appoint, in the most open and palpable manner, the jury, by the *majority of whose voices* the person brought before them is to be tried, they have been enabled to produce a degree of terror never equalled, except under the tyranny of that *Gallic* dictator, *Robespierre*, so frequently abused, and so constantly imitated by those who abuse him most. On this side of the *Tweed* there is more difficulty in executing the arbitrary will of a few inquisitors. Exertions after exertions have been made to crush opinion: and yet freedom of opinion still lifts its head on high, and braves the thunders of ministerial and inquisitorial vengeance. Magistrates have tried all means to suppress discussion, and all would not do. They have tried cabals and intrigues of every description—nay they have winked and connived at violence, and even sent into rooms, where persons were assembled for the purpose of free discussion,

discussion, their police officers to create riots. Yet still the treasury papers call aloud for the magistrates to repeat those fruitless exertions to crush every individual who dares to speak the truth, and to find *honest juries* to acquit him for having so spoken.

Yes, Citizens, the oracular diurnal pamphleteer of a certain great treasury scribbler, has been calling very loud upon the magistrates to repress assemblies, in which it is wickedly maintained that *cruelties and murders have been committed by crimps and press gangs*.

Citizens, I should like to know what sort of exertion it is that magistrates are to appeal to, in order to suppress the *Jacobinical crime of Reason*. *Police officers* have already kicked up riots and neglected to take themselves up for such rioting—*Police officers* have brought huge deluded *coal-heavers*, to bellow forth outrageous songs within these walls—but who, as soon as they heard the voice of reason, well convinced of the truth of the principles they were sent to decry, departed from the room with denunciations against those who had attempted to delude them, and to inflame their minds against those who, instead of enemies, they found to be their best friends. *Reeves*—the grand arch inquisitor! *Reeves*, the chief magistrate of this district, has given orders to every constable and officer of the Dutchy to crimp me—for I can call it nothing else, to take a man up without warrant, authority or criminal accusation, with what view no one has ever been able to discover or divine—but probably to conduct him on board a ship to fight his Majesty's battles, and maintain the honour of the British flag, in defiance of the blasphemous thunder of republican cannon. A pert little gentleman, also, who though at present no magistrate, may perhaps be one some day or other—a little prating Jack a Dandy, of the name of *Jenkinson*, employed on a certain occasion fifty bludgeon men, to knock Lecturer and auditors o' the head, and all has failed—nuisance has failed—sedition has failed, and high treason itself has failed. I should like to know what are the fresh exertions magistrates are called upon to make, that they may rival the triumphant glories of the *Court of Justiciary*, and crush the monster discussion, in this part, also, of Great Britain.

To return, however, to *Scotland*. If we are to judge from mere external circumstances, the sentiments of liberty there lie prostrate at the feet of those to whom liberty is always offensive, and reason always a crime. But let us not conclude too hastily, appearances are frequently delusive; and the rage



and indignation that is smothered and pent up within the bosoms of individuals who dare not speak, frequently engenders fury more destructive, and dispositions more inimical to the preservation of peace and happiness, than all the flaming sedition, as it is called, ever breathed from the lips of those who, boldly speaking their minds, and investigating their principles, are liable to be contradicted at all times; and if they speak falsely to be convicted of that falsehood, and overwhelmed with the shame and disgrace due to the wretch "who dare think one thing and another tell."

Citizens, we cannot be ignorant of the character of the Scotch nation; we must be narrow minded, infatuated beings, if we do not admit that our brethren on the other side of the *Tweed* are a brave, a gallant, an intrepid, and a reflecting people. We must be lost to all knowledge of the human character, if we suppose that such men relinquish their principles merely because they are not permitted, for the present, to speak them. We must be blind indeed to all conviction that results from an observation of the conduct and character of mankind, if we are not convinced that, by attempting to smother and suffocate the discussion of opinions, and forcibly to suppress the expression of popular sentiment, we alienate the affections of those men whom we thus treat like vanquished slaves, and create in their bosoms a determined enmity against that government which thus compels them to be *enemies* when they wish only to be *reformers*.

What can you suppose, at this time, must pass in the breast of the Scotchman, who feels himself no longer enabled, on account of this system of persecution and inquisition, to unbosom himself to the friend of his heart, or speak his sentiments over the cheerful glass? What must be his feelings, I say, when he finds sentiments thus immured in his bosom? Must they not be eminently hostile to the aggrandizement of those who have thus chosen to be dreaded masters, when they might have reigned in the affections of men who, owning no master, look only with veneration and esteem to their benefactors—and, above all, to the public benefactor, whose eminent situation enables him to dispense felicity to thousands.

Citizens, the plain and simple fact is, that there is but one source of national peace and popular attachment; and that is the unforced affections of the heart. You may *compel* men to *hate* you; but their *affections* you must win by kind and gentle means—they can never be forced; and not less ridiculous is any attempt to coerce mankind, and compel them to applaud  
your

your measures, or be attached to your government, than was the attempt of the oriental Tyrant in the fable, who attempted to compel, by arbitrary laws, every person throughout his Court to wear the smile of gladness upon his face. All the gloomy, all the malignant passions you may extort; but if you wish for dispositions friendly to happiness and virtue, you must win them by gentle means—and if you will not, by wise, virtuous, and just regulations, secure the affections of the people; if you will not, by equal laws fairly and justly administered, secure to the magistracy of the country that veneration which virtue and wisdom can alone obtain, farewell to all hopes of enjoying any peace and tranquillity in the elevated situations to which fortune may have exalted you, or to which you may have aspired by intrigue and artifice.

But let us turn from Scotland to a picture still more gloomy and unfortunate. Let us behold the condition of our sister country *Ireland*. Here, I believe, we shall find still less to exult in, still less to be satisfied with. Here we shall find discontent disseminating itself through all ranks and conditions of the people; and we shall find (melancholy to relate!) that coercive measures have driven many an excellent and upright individual into the mistaken notion of looking for protection from a foreign army, and wishing rather for the assistance of those who hitherto had been considered as their natural enemies, than the protection of those who ought to be their natural and their zealous friends.

Perhaps, Citizens, it may not be improper, in this part of the investigation, to take a brief view of the former history of the country I am speaking of. We are to remember that *Ireland* was in the first instance a conquered province; and we ought therefore, perhaps, to be the more anxious to treat the people with kindness; since it is only from this kindness that we can possibly expect to fix their attachment, and unite them to us in the firm bonds of amity.

The barbarous maxims of ancient conquerors always reduced the natives of a subjugated country to a situation little better than that of slaves; and, accordingly, the descendants from the ancient *Irish*, to this day (for we have not yet entirely conquered those prejudices which early tyranny taught mankind) are to be found principally among the most neglected orders of the community; while the generality of the gentry trace their descent from English families. Hence we have not yet that thorough incorporation of the different classes which must be the zealous wish of every good friend  
to



to the peace and happiness of mankind: since without this the gentle intercourses and sympathies of life, the reciprocations, produced by intermediate and gradual steps of accession and declension, have never been known in *Ireland* as once they were in *England*.

Citizens, the abject condition of the lower orders in *Ireland* is such as no individual of feeling and humanity can contemplate, without regret and anguish. Ignorance—savage ignorance reigns triumphant: and what has been the blessed consequence? There have been ministers, in modern times, who were very anxious to suppress all enquiry, and who considered it as an enormous crime to impart information to mankind. If you wish to rule people in peace and keep them in proper order, say they, you must keep the swinish multitude in ignorance. Thus, and thus only, are you to make them quietly submit to their lordly drivers. Yet look at *Ireland*. Is the maxim supported by the experience of that country? a greater degree of ignorance, I should suppose, than prevails among the *wild Irish*, as they are called, even the Ministers of this country would not wish to prevail. And yet the history of *Ireland* is little else than a continued narrative of ferocious depredations committed by these ignorant people, linked in tumultuary combinations, to extort by violence what they have not improved intellect to demand by the voice of manly and intrepid reason.

Citizens, I speak not from national feelings, I wish to triumph over all nationality: and with me, indeed, there is no national distinction between *Irishmen*, *Scotchmen* and *Englishmen*. I care not which name is articulated first. It is only contending which brother of the same equal family shall first be named: and as *I abhor the rights of primogeniture*, I am satisfied with which soever you begin; so that you will but admit that they have all the same common rights of happiness and fraternity.

But at the same time I must observe, that in almost all cases, the brothers and sisters of the same family have a different character. From the little intercourse I have had with *Irish gentlemen*, I have found it pretty uniformly agreed, that even among the higher classes of society, information, generally speaking, is but too much neglected. Hence it is that there is a greater disposition to neglect the rights and interests of the lower orders. I know there are brilliant exceptions. We have had repeated proofs of the strong genius and energetic understanding of the *Irish nation*—proofs that make one still

still more lament that a mistaken sort of hospitality, too nearly allied to drunkenness and debauchery, should have obscured the faculties which might have contributed so much to the happiness of the universe. Let me observe, however, that nothing can be more unfriendly to the happiness, and consequently to the contentment of the laborious orders of society than that men of the higher (that is to say the *more useless*) ranks should be lost in extravagant debauchery, and insult the starving wretchedness of the poor by the wasteful profusion of privileged licentiousness.

Another circumstance, contributing to this discontent, is the common practice of the gentry in *Ireland*, farming out their estates, as they generally do, in large portions, to intermediate proprietors, whose trade being extortion, trample still more upon those from whose industry the happiness, the grandeur, and the strength of the country is alone to be supported. This being the state of society in *Ireland*, we shall not be much surprized to find that, for centuries, the history of that country has been uniformly marked by the excesses committed by combinations of the common people.

The first instance I shall particularly mention is the *Rapparees*, a set of persons whose history you will find amply detailed in "Sir John Dalrymple's Memoirs:" and perhaps you will be a little amused by tracing the very great resemblance between those depredators and the "virtuous peasants of *Poitou*," as the assassins and midnight plunderers of *Brittany* have been affectedly called; and whose sole virtue is being the tools of an insolent swarm of Priests and aristocratic oppressors, and lurking in woods, at the corners of roads, to cut the throats of every individual whom they think differs from them in opinion. That such is the real history of the *Chouans*, if I were disposed to enter further into the digression, might be easily proved. And but too nearly such is the picture drawn by Sir John Dalrymple, of the *Rapparees* or Tories; and who were the individuals who had the merited honour of conferring a title upon the high flown aristocrats in this country.

After these *Rapparees* arose another sect, rather of a different description, but still who unfortunately marked the history of the country by associations highly inimical to public peace and welfare.

But let us mark, if you please, how they arose, as it may be a useful lesson to those who, in this country, are so very fond



fond of the inclosing system.—Not that I find fault with the mere circumstance of inclosure, but with *that system of enclosure by which the rich monopolize to themselves the estates, rights, and possessions of the poor.*

The men of whom I am now about to speak are the *White Boys*; and who, in the first instance, were called *levellers*.

It may not be unimportant to tell you how they obtained that name: for even they were not levellers of *Reeves's* description. The sublime idea of levelling all intellect and plundering all property, was left for discovery to the keen and penetrating genius of that great lawyer—the founder of *inquiries*, and the organizer of the system of spies and perjured treachery.

The *Levellers of Ireland* took their name from the following circumstance. There were, in that division of Ireland where they first arose, very considerable commons, which had been long assistant to the comfortable support of poor families. But certain persons of considerable power and distinction, took it into their heads that they could make a better use of these commons, than the poor people did; and therefore, without any act of Parliament or legal authority whatever, they seized those commons and inclosed them with what are called *dry walls*—that is to say, walls of stones piled one upon another, without any cement. The common people, not very well liking this system of encroachment, levelled those dry walls constantly by night which the aristocrats constantly built up in the day. Hence they were called *levellers*. The usurpers of the people's rights were thus compelled to build wet walls, that the joints of the *aristocratic stones* being combined by the democratic lime, might resist the encroachments of these *levellers*. Such is the early history of these associators, but as they afterwards adopted a strange fashion of "wearing their shirts over their coats," from that circumstance they came to be called *White Boys*.

Under this denomination they continued their depredations; and, at last, in an unaccountable disposition to do some degree of justice to these common people, who shewed that they would never be quiet till they got it, those commons were restored, by an act of Parliament—to their right owners. But, as generally happens, when rulers struggle against the rights of the people) the repentance came too late. *The seeds of sedition were sown, as they always are sown, by the tyranny and*

*ill management of the rulers. And concessions were made, as usual, when those concessions could no longer heal the wounds which tyranny and usurpation had inflicted.—May the concessions of modern Aristocrats be made in better season; before the discontents, which their present system of oppression cannot fail to disseminate, have taken such deep root as to be fatal to the tranquillity of the community! that we may thus avoid the consequences which must inevitably result from a determination to uphold the rights of borough mongers, in opposition to the rights of man! and the privileges of a few, in opposition to the just immunities of all!*

Citizens, I shall proceed to observe that there are other circumstances, which result from maxims of policy equally unjust and ridiculous, which have a tendency, at this time, to excite in Ireland even the wildest dispositions of democracy.

I mean, in particular, the universal dissatisfaction which at this time prevails, in consequence of the refusal of an act of justice to the consciences of a great majority of the people, which was so peaceably demanded, and which there was at one time reason to hope would have been so honourably conceded. We cannot, Citizens, avoid observing that, ever since the revolution, there has been a disposition, almost in whatever party happened to be uppermost, to cherish a division of sentiments upon speculative opinions. This is one of the engines constantly employed to divide the people: it being the maxim with those whose principles are weak, and whose ambition is strong to divide first that they may conquer afterwards. Thus, for a whole century almost, have the minds of the *Irish Catholics* been agitated against those of the *established religion*, and the minds of the *Protestants* agitated against the *Catholics*. Hence, also, in this country, have the *ridiculous test and corporation acts* been supported with a view, as one would imagine, to no other end but to keep alive the unnatural ferment and dissatisfaction, which has so long subsisted between *Protestants of the Church of England and Protestant Dissenters*.

This maxim, however, of division upon religious sentiment has been strained too far: as has always been the case with respect to dishonorable expedients. If you go upon the plain, simple principle of justice, you can never strain too far: because the further you go in the right road, the nearer you get to the great standard of truth. But if, on the contrary, you adopt principles of ambition, and paltry expedients



for the gratification of that ambition; those very expedients, carried to an excess, recoil upon those who have attempted to support themselves by such means, and destroy the power they were intended to aggrandize.

Such has been, in a considerable degree, the case with respect to disputations and jealousies upon religious subjects. Mankind have been taught, by artifices so frequently discovered, to consider these as intrigues of state tricksters and jugglers; and have therefore come pretty unanimously to the adoption of this plain and self-evident axiom—that *if you wish for the full and ample enjoyment of the rights of religious opinion, you must first acquire the full and actual enjoyment of political liberty,*

When you have annihilated usurpation, tyranny and monopoly—when you have made the voice and sentiments of the people a fair and just rule for the principles of legislation, you have done away the power of one faction to tyrannize over another; and having established liberty upon so broad a basis, you are enabled to found a temple so capacious, as to afford every honest heart an opportunity to indulge every sentiment, and exercise every inclination, not hostile to the peace, happiness, and welfare of mankind.

We have talked, Citizens, of toleration. We have made an empty boast of *granting a part of their rights* to particular classes of people, till mankind have discovered that *the very word toleration is but an insult: that no person has a right to tolerate the opinions of another: because no person has a right to call the opinions of another in question.* The right to form our own judgment upon every abstract question is a right which can never be taken from man, though its exercise may be tyrannically suspended. (*Interruption.*)

Toleration means putting up with the opinions of others. But I should like to know what right any person can have for supposing it a matter that depends upon his inclination whether another man shall have an opinion, will, or inclination of his own. Nay, opinion is not only an inviolable right; but a right that mocks the folly of persecution; because it never can be taken away. You may make men hypocrites, indeed, (and perhaps governors, not being very much attached to sincerity, may not have any particular objection to hypocrites!) but you cannot compel them to change their opinions. To talk, therefore, of toleration is rank absurdity. It is the *right*, not the *indulgence* of the free exercise of the convictions

convictions of judgment, upon questions which society had no right to interfere with, that is claimed by every enlightened advocate for the happiness of mankind.

But let us consider what has been the conduct of the Minister in this respect. We cannot, Citizens, be blind to the truth, that the whole people of *Ireland* have, of late, expressed a strong inclination that the *Catholics* should be emancipated from the restrictions under which they lay. It has not only been the wish of *Catholics* themselves; it has been the wish of Protestants. This unanimous wish inspired a rational expectation in the minds of the people, that compliance and not coercion would follow. This expectation we know to have been considerably increased by the appointment of *Earl Fitzwilliam* to the Viceroyalty. I shall not dwell upon events which are fresh in your remembrance. Suffice it to say, that *Ireland* expected emancipation; but that *Ireland* was disappointed; and was taught to remember that she was dependent upon the Cabinet of *London*: or, in other words, upon King *William* the fourth—alias KING PITT; whose sovereign will and pleasure was, that the *Catholics* should not be emancipated; and that the wishes of the people of *Ireland* should not be indulged.

The fact is that a sort of congenial sympathy affected his mind. He was exceedingly unwilling that the *Pensioners*, who monopolized all the power, patronage, and wealth of *Ireland*, should lose any part of that power; while he himself, monopolizing all the power, patronage, and property of *England*, had the power of preventing so disagreeable a circumstance. But what were the pretences for refusing the emancipation? Why forsooth we are told, all of a sudden, that the *Catholics*, hitherto proscribed as the most violent advocates for despotic power, by a sort of magical *hocus pocus*, are turned to violent democrats, and that they would overturn royalty, and aristocracy, and all the peaceful and regular institutions of orderly government. This it is true may appear strange! Such an alteration, in so short a time! But the wonder vanishes when we observe how rapid a progress certain principles are making; and that even the *Pope* himself has turned Jacobin, and forced his bull to bellow forth VOX POPULI VOX DEI: "the voice of the people is the voice of God! and therefore you, my good son *Louis*, must submit to the will of God, expressed in so clear and audible a manner!" If, therefore, Sir *Infallibility* himself has proclaimed this great truth, it is certainly not impossible that the devotees of



his *infallible holiness* should entertain the same faith. Be this, however, as it will, the catholic emancipation was rejected; and, instead of the abolition of ridiculous distinctions between one religion and another, a system of military coercion is established in *Ireland*, and the reign of a new Viceroy was proclaimed by the arrival of thousands of *English Fencibles*, into a country where *English* and *Irish* ought to be no further distinctions than right hand and left of the same body; one of which could not be employed against the other, without involving an act of suicide.

But what must be the tendency of such a measure? Depression and terror for the present, a civil war for the future. Disunion and destruction, and scenes of slaughter, in which brother, perhaps, must shed once more (as on the plains of *America*) the blood of brother, and the *Irish relative* glut the keen poinard in the breast of his *English friend*.

Measures of this description mark a desperation which can only be ascribed to phrenzy. That the Minister of a great country should hope to enforce these measures, which he cannot carry by trusting fairly to the hearts and wishes of the people, by rendering one part of the country an instrument to coerce the other, is a wickedness so wild and extravagant, that one would be astonished any human being could adopt it without some preconcerted scheme to separate the two parts of the Empire.

But it is impossible this system should succeed. The light of reason has gone abroad, humanity has warmed the breast of man; and we have found (strange indeed that we should have been so long in making the discovery!) that even the sooty *African* is our brother: that even the poor "whip-galled slave," in the *West Indies*, deserves our commiseration: and, this being the case, do you suppose we can be blind to this still more evident truth, that *English, Scotch and Irish*, are one and the same—that they are united and bound together in the chains of inseparable interest—and that to attempt to employ one of them, as an instrument of coercion against the other, is an attempt to make men the assassins of each other, who, upon the first moment's reflection, instead of poignards, instead of coercion and malice, will extend the hand of fraternity to each other, and rush forward, not to each other's destruction, but with open arms to the embrace of concord, peace, liberty and affection, exclaiming with ardour—*think not to make us brutes and savages, to tear each other's breasts, we are all men, WE ARE ALL BRETHREN,*  
and

and will not shed the blood of those whose manly hearts are warmed with affection for us, and whose generous virtues call for our admiration and esteem!

But, Citizens, notwithstanding all this progress, generally speaking, towards this union of sentiment, it cannot but be acknowledged, that the measures adopted by Ministers have, in particular bosoms, stirred up a spirit of disunion: and I am much deceived if there are not in *Ireland*, at this time, strong dispositions to an absolute separation from this country.

I speak not wishes but fears. My sentiments are certainly congenial to the indivisibility of the three countries. I think we are not too large, considering the great and powerful nations in our neighbourhood: and though I have hopes that the system of hostility is dying away—though I have great expectations that the present hostilities are the last agonizing and convulsive throws of that system of perpetual war and devastation, which has so long depopulated *Europe*; yet, at the same time, I cannot but think that some degree of proportion between the strength, power, and population of neighbouring countries, may have some tendency towards protecting them from the renewal of that system. Therefore I do not, in this case, “speak by tropes,” nor, “by my fears express my hopes.” To whatever degree this disposition may have spread, certainly the measures at present adopted, must have a considerable tendency to increase it: For can we be extravagant enough to suppose, that, by mere military force, we can retain *Ireland* as a dependant Colony? No—She has a right to be considered as an equal part; possessing all the immunities that we ought to possess; and, therefore, in subjection she never will be held.

Observe what dissatisfactions make their appearance. When prosecutions for high treason are going abroad, there is generally a conviction, in the minds of those who institute them, that their measures are such as justify attempts of that description. When we perceive the manner in which they have behaved lately towards the *defenders*; and when we consider how these *defenders* have apparently increased in number, I think we shall perceive that we are not strengthening the bonds of union and affection. And though these *defenders*, in many respects, bear great similarity to the *White Boys* or *levellers* of former times, yet I think the late trial will lead me to suspect, that there is a powerful and formidable conspiracy to effect a separation between *Ireland* and *England*.

I should



I should wish, from the bottom of my soul, that no such conspiracy existed; but if it do, can the late event promise much for the frustration of such a design? quite the contrary. What has been the conduct of the man who, upon the oath of a single witness, swearing himself to be fore-sworn, has been condemned to execution. Think of his manly, his intrepid, his magnificent conduct! Hear, in every word and sentiment that he speaks, the feelings and convictions of an honest enthusiasm—misled and deluded, it is true, or rather driven, by the persecutions and oppressions of the times, into notions and projects offensive to the laws, and opposite, I believe to the real interests of his country—yet an enthusiasm so powerful—so fascinating—so encouraging as cannot fail to produce an effect the very reverse of panic, depression and dispersion. Let us be just to those whose actions we do not applaud. Let us confess then that this man could not have so deported himself—could not have so expressed himself—could not have waked this glow of involuntary admiration in our hearts, if he had not been prompted and animated by an internal feeling of the justice and propriety of his conduct. And who knows how widely this delusive feeling may have spread? or how much warmth, enthusiasm, and revenge, may have been generated in the breasts of his followers, by his heroic intrepidity? Do we, who disapprove the *cause*, feel this veneration for the *man*?—What then may be the emotions of those who participate in his political feelings? Let us remember, also, that these Defenders in general, if there were not a great mixture of justice and truth in their pretensions, could never have become formidable to government. *Wat Tyler*, that great and glorious character, so infamously assassinated, and so wickedly blasphemed by courtly historians, would never have been the leader of a powerful body of the populace, if the pretences for which he had armed had not been founded in justice and natural equity; nor would these Defenders ever have been formidable if there had not been oppressions, and acts of injustice, which stimulated the feelings of many an honest but impatient being, rather than endure the miseries of his country, to appeal to means unjustifiable, but which, from the ignorance they are retained in, are the only means they know how to devise.

In short, I am convinced that this act of coercion, and the magnanimity with which the man has perished, will rather promote

promote the cause of *defenderism* than beat it down; and that, if we would in reality check the progress of this evil, we must not appeal to coercion, but must ameliorate the condition of society; and reform those abuses which have reduced the lower orders to their present melancholy situation.

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On the independence of mind produced by genuine BENEVOLENCE.—From DYER's *Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence*.

[The pamphlet from which the following extract is made, is the production of Geo. Dyer, B. A. a Citizen whose life appears to have been spent in the active exercise of the virtue which his pen is employed to recommend to others: The particular work, of which these paragraphs are a specimen, and "the complaints of the poor," a pamphlet, formerly published by the same estimable author, contain innumerable passages which, both in point of *fact* and *principle*, challenge the attention of all those who sincerely wish properly to understand the condition, and practically to alleviate the calamities of mankind.]

"THE independence of a good man consists in a superiority to every influence, but of moral persuasion, and to every force, but of rational conviction. It proceeds from a sense of dignity, and personal rectitude: it is that decent pride, that characterizes generous minds; that high sense of honour, that will not suffer them to yield to profligacy, or to stoop to meanness: it is a kind of majesty, essential to virtue; or more properly speaking, it is the grace of ingenuousness, and the freedom of innocence.

"This virtuous independence crowns the happiness of private life; and happy are the governments, that give it public security! In steady and pure governments this becomes a principal consideration of national regard. Their aim is to produce public happiness, not to aggrandize or enrich individuals; to procure moral freedom through the medium of political justice. Offices are appropriated to talent; and, if virtues are not distinguished by honours, they are not, at least, exposed to penalties. The cultivator of the land enjoys the fruits without oppression; the legislator, and the magistrate are indemnified, if not rewarded. No one is tempted to exchange



change his principles for a livelihood; and each considers himself as an individual of a family, in which no one is a slave.

“ But governments, as well as individuals, are imperfect, some in a greater, others in a less degree. In many an original sin lurks, that breaks out, at intervals, through every department, and weakens and exhausts the whole political system. One powerful spirit of tyranny pervades them; and men, through habits of tyranny, have scarcely a term to express freedom or honour\*. In others, where despotism is not so conspicuous, corruption may supply its place. In a system, where besides the regular salaries of office, sinecures and douceurs are held out, corruption is inseparable. A sinecure is, sometimes, an unequivocal and direct bargain; and at others, where no bargain is openly made, it is secretly implied. You are the property of your patron: not, indeed, his beast, but his dependent; his political slave: and whether your reward be money or honour, it stands not in necessary connection with talents or virtues, but is the price of your principles and of your influence: to give directions would be unnecessary and tedious: you must understand hints: study the language of becks and nods; utter such a word, though you comprehend not its meaning; perform such an action, though convinced of its baseness. An honest man, perhaps, would denominate such douceurs, bribes; and though, possibly, he would not call the receiver a villain, he would scarcely consider him a good man.

“ The douceurs of government are not the only obstructions to independence. Considerations arising from rank, learning, religion, political sentiment, and country, have their separate weight in different minds. But the man, who, before he performs a beneficent action, or exercises the tender affections, must be first satisfied on these points,—Are you a nobleman, or a commoner: a poor or a rich man; a philosopher or a peasant; a christian or an infidel; a black or a white man?—one who must thus, as it were, run over the whole catechism of man, cannot be independent, in the sense in which the philanthropist is.—*Homo sum*,—I am a man—he stops there.

\* This is literally true of the Russian language, as I am informed by a gentleman, who resided many years in Russia, and who is well acquainted with the language.

# PATRIOT'S FEELING;

OR THE

## CALL OF DUTY.

### ON QUITTING THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

“Falsus honor juvat, et mendax infamia terras

“Quem, nisi mendorum et medicandum?”

Hor.

*VECTA*, farewell—to other scenes I fly,  
Far from thy cheerful haunts and genial sky,  
Thy fertile vales, thy mountains steep and hoar,  
And charms romantic of thy varied shore.  
No more along thy level beach I stray,  
Nor o'er thy rocky fragments force my way;  
Where wrecks of matter in confusion hurl'd,  
Wake the wild image of a crumbling world.  
No more in *Apley's* pleasant haunts I rove,  
Where murmuring surges wash the pendant grove,  
O'er *Solent's* wave while barks unnumber'd glide,  
And anchor'd navies float in tow'ring pride:  
Nor, turning hence to *Chale's* tempestuous shore,  
The *Blackgang's* savage horrors I explore—  
Terrific chine! whose yawning cliffs arise  
From Ocean midway to the azure skies;

No. XXVIII.

Tt

While



While curling clouds, impregn'd with briny dew,  
 Wrap thy rough summit from the gazer's view !  
 These, and a thousand magic scenes beside,  
 Beauteous or wild—where, in luxuriant pride,  
 Fertility prevails, or where, unbroke,  
 O'er-rugged Nature spurns the gentle yoke  
 Of human culture, to our wond'ring eyes,  
 While rock, bush, brake, in strange confusion rise—  
 These I forego ; and leave with these behind,  
 Whate'er is dearest to the social mind—  
 The lisping babe, whose artless smiles impart  
 Joy's anxious throb to the paternal heart,  
 And the soft partner, whose kind cares bestow  
 Sweets to each joy, and balm to every woe—  
 These I forego—the tenderest boons of life !  
 While I, once more, braving the two-fold strife  
 Of factious Envy and tyrannic Rage,  
 Corruption's hydra-headed fiend engage ;  
 Reason's keen sword, once more, indignant wield,  
 Truth for my helm, and Justice for my shield ;  
 Nor fear, thus arm'd, Oppression's fiercest strife—  
 The Law's dark ambush, nor the assassin's knife !  
 For, O what mind of generous frame can brook  
 To see his country to the galling yoke  
 Of base Corruption bow ? while millions pine,  
 Condemned each boon of nature to resign !—  
 To drudge in ceaseless toil, and abject fear,  
 And ignorance, while Pride, with gripe severe,  
 Extorts the hard-earn'd produce, to support  
 The headlong projects of a venal court,  
 And to unwieldy grandeur lift the crew  
 Whose crimes undo their country ? Who can view  
 The peasants' starving wretchedness ; the woes  
 Which Labour's palid progeny enclose

In each proud city; or the village train  
 Of barefoot, ragged children, who sustain  
 A vagrant life of penury and pain  
 By cringing beggary, and dog the wheels  
 Of passing Luxury—proud fiend! who feels  
 Nor shame, nor soft compunction, but with smiles  
 Enjoys their antic tricks and cringing wiles,  
 And holds such abject homage as his due!  
 —Who, that has thought, such piteous scenes can view,  
 Nor feel indignant ardors urge his soul  
 The cause of wrongs so numerous to controul,  
 At vile Corruption's o'ergorg'd throat to fly,  
 And quell the fiend, or in the conflict die!

Come then,—tho' Calumny, with envious rage,  
 In league with tyrant enmity engage;—  
 Tho' base Suspicion, with malignant aim,  
 Distort my actions, and my views defame:—  
 Tho' those, for whom, at peril of my life,  
 I foremost stood to brave Oppression's strife,  
 To wildest tales the willing ear incline,  
 And with the common enemy combine  
 To blast my peace;—yet come, thou godlike pow'r,  
 To whom full oft, at midnight's solemn hour,  
 While others sleep, I pour the anxious soul,  
 That not alone would reach thy glorious goal,  
 O Liberty! but pants to take along,  
 Freed from vile chains, the renovated throng  
 Long trampled in the dust! Come, sacred pow'r,  
 O'er every sense the enthusiast ardor show'r  
 That warms thy favour'd vot'ries. O arise!  
 Flame in my breath, and lighten in my eyes,  
 That I may blast Oppression; rouse mankind  
 To truth and happiness, and lift the mind

Above



Above the fordid passions that debase,  
And fix the fetters of the human race!

O, let not private wrongs—let not the pride  
Of ill-requited services divide  
Patriot from Patriot, nor in party brawls  
Plunge him, resentful, while the public calls  
For zeal unanimous. Teach me, blest power,  
That noble magnanimity to tow'r  
Above each private feeling. Steel my heart  
With all the Stoic's firmness; and impart  
A persevering energy, unsway'd  
By Passion or Corruption, undismay'd  
By Pow'r or Faction, or the furious hiss  
Of undeserv'd Suspicion; and be this  
My sole revenge on those whose slanderous tongue  
'Taint my fair fame—to shew the envious throng  
*Nor wrongs nor favours move his constant mind*  
*Whose first great object is—to SERVE MANKIND!*

ALDERMOOR,

27th August, 1795.



## THE TRIBUNE, N<sup>o</sup>. XXIX.

*The TERRORS and VIOLENCE of ALARM-ISTS, an impolitic confession of the injustice and absurdity of their System:—the Exordium to a course of Lectures on the CAUSES OF THE RECENT DISTURBANCES—commenced Sept. 23d.*

CITIZENS,

I SHALL begin with observing, that, among other good effects lately produced by this practice of Lecturing, one of the most important is, that a class of men, unctured very deeply with aristocratic prejudices, have, during this season, very much frequented, and, greatly to their honour, have very peaceably and quietly deported themselves in, this room.—For this I am perhaps indebted, in no inconsiderable degree, to the most virulent of all the ministerial news-papers: for although the government (I should say the clerks and ministers of government) have prevented my advertisements from appearing in those papers, yet “the True Briton” kindly and generously favors me with a puff almost every day, free of all charge and expence. These men, perhaps, remember that they are very well paid by the Treasury, and may therefore afford to do a kind action for a *Sans Culotte*, without reward.

But whether it be from these kind *puffs oblique*, or from whatever circumstance, that I am indebted for such attendance, I know not: but this I know, which is more important,—many persons have gone away from this place, proselytes to the cause they came to ridicule, and ashamed of the prejudices they had so hastily adopted. There are others also, it must be admitted, who quit the room with denunciations and threats of vengeance, and by anonymous letters testify their rancour, and threaten me with the pillory, Newgate, and the gibbet.

Citizens, I cannot pass over these absurd proclamations of the terror and apprehensions which these aristocrats seem to feel at the present political enquiry, without enquiring, Why this anxiety to suppress meetings of this description? My doctrines are peaceable. I labour to prevent commotion, not to promote it: and it cannot be denied, that *the discussion of*

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*political*



*political subjects is a constitutional right of Britons, and the unalienable right of man.* Yet, forsooth, Discussion must be crushed—Enquiry must be prevented. But how? They can no longer hope assistance from the perjuries of their *spies and informers*. Conscious of the legality of my doctrines, I am provided with a short-hand writer, who can prove what I say, and detect, by accurate evidence, the mis-statements of these assassins: and, if it should please his majesty's ministers that these Lectures should be repeated in a court of justice, and circulated through the country in *Reports of Secret Committees*, word for word, it may be pointed out what are the dreadful doctrines delivered from this place.

But, Citizens, there is a consistent want of policy in the conduct of these aristocrats. What will you conceive, when you hear what a dreadful alarm has lately been created through the village of Chelsea, by the libellous Jacobinical words, **DEATH OR LIBERTY**, written on the walls and gateways of that neighbourhood? Would you suppose, that meetings of the Churchwardens and Overseers could be held on such an occasion, and that a lady of quality—a titled lady, (strange degeneracy!) descended from one of those illustrious houses that have spilt their blood in the cause of Liberty, has occasioned a hand-bill to be stuck about, offering £20 reward to whoever would discover the writer of these dreadful cabalistical and jacobinical words?—It was not enough to send a lad to rub them out, with denunciations in his mouth, and a dishevelled hair in his hand, hoping that death would be the portion of the wretch who was bold enough to write so wicked an inscription. No: rewards and parish proclamations were to be issued, to terrify the gaping multitude into the belief, that even to talk of Liberty was sedition and high treason.

Citizens, *there was a time when Death or Liberty was the burthen of every Briton's song*: when it was thought that no man was a friend to the constitution or country of Britain, who was not ready to reverberate those sounds with an energy that proved them to come from his heart. What then is the reason of this change? Is it the intention of Aristocracy thus to libel the institution that sanctions their privileges? Is it their opinion that Liberty and Aristocracy are inconsistent with each other? If it is, I cannot wonder that a miserable system should be accompanied with such miserable fears:—Fears which every little noise can startle, and every breath of wind fan into a flame.

I will

I will give you another instance of this:—The man that kept the *Magpye* in *Chelsea* had in his house the model of a *guillotine*, which had been exhibited about the town, and particularly in the Haymarket, at the time when every exhibition and spectacle was encouraged, by the alarmists, that could excite the terrors, and inflame the prejudices, of the people. This machine, after having done its duty before the public, was deposited, as a security for a debt which the joiner was not able to pay, in the hands of the publican: it was accordingly put in a room seldom used, and where of course this treasonable curiosity was seldom seen. It happened, however, that some party-coloured birds (that is to say, some Justices and Parish Officers) dined at the *Magpye*, and, the house being uncommonly full, necessity induced the landlord to introduce the Churchwardens, Overseers, their Worship, and the whole lot of loyal etceteras, into the room where the guillotine was placed. The consternation and terror of this worshipful company, at the sight of an instrument so tremendous, is not to be described. The poor landlord was denounced for a *Jacobin*. It was in vain that he told their enraged and terrified high mightinesses the occasion of his having the machine in his possession. "It was impossible to have such a thing in his house, without some evil intention. A suspicion was even suggested, that, when he wanted a fowl for his spit, he made use of this implement of decapitation, in order to bring his hand in:" and, after a very tumultuous debate, they insisted on his burning it before his own door; but the master of the *Magpye* not being such a *jack-daw* as to obey such a command, they executed their vengeance on the next licensing day, by taking away his licence.

Citizens, what can be the reason of these panics and alarms?—Frail, indeed, must be that loyalty which the exhibition of a *guillotine* can overturn! Frail, indeed, must be that constitution; conscious, indeed, of their corruption, must be its supporters, if they feel themselves convinced, that, to support it, they must be sheltered by darkness—they must shrink from every ray of enquiry. What, are not the sublime rhetorical flourishes of *Burke*, the metaphysical harangues of *Wyndham*, the flowing eloquence of *Pitt*, and the effrontery of *Dundas*—are not all these combined in one harmonious concert of panegyric, and assisted with the full chorus of all the authority, power and wealth of the country, potent enough to overwhelm the feeble voice of one unconnected individual?



—Is it necessary, with such a combination united together to protect, as they say, to support our blessed and glorious constitution, to impose coercive silence upon a solitary Lecturer, lest, with two hours discourse per week, he should talk down the venerable walls and massy pillars of this ancient edifice, and, out-doing Sampson himself, overthrow the *Lords of Gaza* and their temple together, not by the strength of his muscles, but his voice?

No, Citizens, they know very well, that whatever threatens the Constitution of this country is to be looked for from another quarter. It is the pillars of Corruption, not the pillars of the State, that they are afraid should be shaken. It is System, it is the rotten boroughs—not the institutions of our ancestors, they tremble for; and perhaps they are wise (having this system so much at heart) to prevent enquiry as much as they possibly can: for the moment the light of reason shines upon it, its cumbrous deformities and ruinous defects will be evident, and men will live under such a tottering pile of dangerous and disjointed fragments no more.

Let me advise these very wise and very sapient rulers to examine the question a little further; to think a little deeper. Let them consider the absurdity, the extreme danger, of attempting to crush the progress of Political Enquiry: for it is the tendency of political enquiry to inform the mind; and, though you may keep the mind in ignorance, unless you can also prevent the feelings of mankind from taking cognizance of wrongs, you cannot prevent them from being impatient under those wrongs; and when a people are at once impatient of their sufferings, and ignorant of the means of obtaining redress, violence, commotion, and desperate revenge, are inevitable.

You may instance, indeed, the despotisms of Asia, or the subjugation of Turkish slaves, in opposition to this sentiment: but the cases are essentially different. The people of this country are not a herd of two-legged brutes, with whom the divine rights of the Seraglio, or the Cabinet, constitute a part of their religion. The spirit of this country is not yet broken down: energy yet remains among us, and courage and hardihood continue to be traits of the British character. Let reason then have fair play: set wide open the portals of discussion and enquiry, that this spirit may know the manner in which it ought to exert itself.

ON

## ON the CAUSES of the LATE DISTURBANCES.

Part the First. *Including Strictures on the Opinion of Lord BACON, that the Poverty and Misery of the People is the principal Source of SEDITIONS and TROUBLES.*

**I**NOW, Citizens, proceed to illustrate the axiom, that  
 “PARLIAMENTARY CORRUPTION AND MINI-  
 “STERIAL AMBITION ARE THE ORIGINAL SOURCES  
 “OF ALL THE CALAMITIES AND DISTURBANCES  
 “THAT AFFLICT THE NATION!”

I shall begin this subject with observing, what appears to me to be an ample justification of this enquiry, that *Violence* is the twin brother of *Ignorance*; and that both are engendered by *Misery*, and nurtured by *Corruption*!

In order to illustrate this, let us consider awhile the nature of the late disturbances, and recollect who are the men that have been engaged in them. Have they been the frequenters of political Lecturers, or the members of political associations?—We know from facts the contrary. *Reformers have proved themselves to be no rioters*; and we have seen, by the melancholy occurrences at the Old Bailey, a few days ago, that the very men employed to support by coercion the present system of government, are those among whom the unfortunate beings have been found, who were foremost in expressing, in an improper manner, their detestation of certain practices of an oppressive nature, and to express, by violence and fury, their impatience and sense of their wrongs. I allude to the unfortunate Drummer, whose life, it seems, is to atone for the injuries he has committed against the peace of society: a poor being actuated, perhaps, by an honest and laudable motive; but unfortunately plunged so deep in ignorance, as not to know the manner in which such motives ought to have directed him to act. Yet what is the conduct of the scribbling retainers of this coercive system?—What is the conduct of those diurnal retailers of slander and defamation—which call themselves *news-papers*—as if falsehood and calumny could ever be new, when Corruption and Injustice bear the sway?—We find them anxiously and busily employed in base attempts to turn the attention of the people from the real sources of their grievances, to the unfortunate agents and traders,



traders, who are suffering at least their share of all the miseries of the nation.

Citizens, if you persuade mankind that the miller, the mealman, the butcher, the baker, are the causes of the dearth of the necessaries of life, what will be their conduct? They will see the objects of their resentment at hand; and these will become the victims of their mistaken rage.

But the fact is, that it is not individuals—it is mistaken institutions, false principles, and the delusions of Corruption, that have reduced the great mass of the people to that melancholy situation into which they are plunged. It is therefore not by disturbance, not by violence, but by reformation, that these objects must be effected. To this political melioration let us then direct our attention. By a conduct opposite to this, these disturbances, these dispositions to violence, have been considerably cherished and fermented by the advocates of the present administration: nay, a part of the system of some of these supporters seems to have been (with what view it seems not difficult to divine) to foment among the people a disposition to outrage. Witness the commotions at *Manchester*, at *Birmingham*, and other aristocratic parts of the country—commotions that were evidently excited and encouraged by those very individuals whose duty it was to protect the inhabitants in the peaceable possession of their opinions and property. Let us remember the very inadequate compensation that was given to that excellent experimental philosopher *Priestley*, who, after all the labors of a well-spent life, is driven to seek, in trans-atlantic regions, that asylum which the laws (rather let me say those who have grasped the administration of the laws) of this country would not afford him. Let us remember also, that after *Citizen Walker*, and *Citizen Cooper*, had been attacked in their own houses by the lawless insolence of a Church-and-King banditti, the only recompence they received was, that one, by a cruel combination of aristocratic intriguers, was driven into banishment, and the other, on the evidence of a profligate wretch, who confessed that he had been bribed to take away the life of this Citizen's man, was accused of high treason, and tried for a fictitious conspiracy.

Can we wonder, Citizens, if, after this, persons thus schooled in violence should change the object of their depredations? Can we wonder that there should be found those who were hardy enough to follow the precedent thus set them, to the destruction of peace and order; and that those who first encouraged

encouraged this spirit of turbulence, should tremble at its effects?

I remember, Citizens, at one of the meetings of the Friends of the Freedom of the Press, Mr. Grey, in a very animated manner, described the absurd encouragement that had been given to people, assembled in a tumultuous manner, to burn the Apostle of Liberty, *Thomas Paine*, in effigy, after having first carried the mock victim about the streets, with a bladder of bullock's blood for a heart, that they might prick it, and give the surrounding spectators an idea of a fellow-being bleeding to death beneath the assassinating fury of the multitude—I remember Mr. Grey, after describing the disgraceful scene, exclaiming with a sort of prophetic feeling, “O weak and deluded men, thus to stir up the malignant passions of a deluded multitude! How will ye answer for the consequences! How will ye be assured, that, in the revolutions which so rapidly take place in popular opinion, the sanguinary dispositions ye are thus endeavouring to excite may not recoil upon yourselves. Perhaps the time may not be distant, when those who have taught this lesson may be the victims to it; and repent, too late, that turbulent malignity they have taken so much pains to encourage!”

—If we turn our attention to the loyal town of *Birmingham*, shall we not find this prophecy is partly verified already? Having wreaked their vengeance on those who refused to think upon religious and political topics as they dictated, they have now thought that they might do the same on those that did not choose to sell provisions at the price they demanded them.—But it is not to one or two, it is not to half a dozen places that these disturbances have been confined: and we cannot but have reason to dread the dangerous consequences which may result to the peace and tranquillity of society, from the still remaining seeds of these commotions.—Citizens, if people are not to be shewn that reason is better than violence, and peaceful enquiry better than turbulence and the sword, however we may lament these delusions, however sorry we may be to find that mankind cannot perceive that the calamities of a nation are not to be amended by pulling down a mill, or gutting a crimping-house, violence must be expected, whenever popular distress prevails.

Let us see, then, if there are no means to prevent these calamities. If there is something in the state and policy of the country that can be proved to be the cause of these disturbances, surely we ought to pity, rather than abhor the disturbers,



disturbers, and to wish that, instead of punishing these individuals, we could find other means of removing the occasion of the evil. Finding, as we must find, that insurrections are never produced in any country, without a gloomy and ferocious opinion having first been produced in the minds of the people, that *they have nothing to lose* by their imprudent conduct.

Let us then review the state of society, and endeavour to develope the cause of the evil; and then consider how we are to procure the remedy. We shall soon find, I believe, that though coercion seems to be one of the readiest ways of correcting offences, yet that it is never the best; that bodies of men, of whatever description, who have been decimated by the arm of chastisement, are not the better for such severity; and that, by such punishment, we aggravate, not remove, the evil we wish to cure.

This is not a Jacobinical sentiment, Citizens, from the school of French philosophers. It is a maxim laid down by one of the greatest philosophers of this country, Lord Bacon of Verulam, who (in his *Essays*, page 77) says, "Neither doth it follow, that because these *Furies* are a sign of *Troubles*, that the suppressing of them, with too much severity, should be a remedy of *Troubles*."—Citizens, we have found that it is no remedy. Our gaols have been crowded, and Botany Bay has been peopled with individuals who were ornaments to society, and who have been subjected to cruel punishments for offences without a name; and we have poor unfortunate beings languishing under cruel sentences, upon charges of the most frivolous kind. Witness the heavy sentence passed upon poor *Walson*, for being proved to have sitten in the same box at an eating-house with a person whom a French emigrant spy swore to have delivered a hand-bill to him—and poor *Barrow*, a young man of education, of parts and expectations, not only now languishing in confinement, but reduced to such misery by persecution and hard treatment, as to depend for his support upon casual charity. Have their punishments so damped the rising spirit of the people, as to lead us to expect that contentment and tranquillity are to be restored by such coercion?

If you want further illustration, look to a neighbouring country: take a short review of the state of *Ireland*. Are coercion and punishment, persecution and dragooning, from this picture, so devoutly to be wished?

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A *Conventional Bill* was passed, to prevent the people of Ireland from meeting peaceably together, to seek a redress of grievances. What was the consequence of this Convention Bill? their own statement shall be my reply; they tell you that plans of treason have grown up, in secret holes and corners, under the name of *defenderism*; do you want a more conclusive argument, that when you prevent the progress of reason and investigation, you drive mankind to projects of violence and distraction, which never else would have entered their heads. When these lurking discontents, then, are afloat, throw not the individual into the gloom of concealment and fear. Let him speak his griefs in the wide circle of society; let him see the honest faces of his fellow beings; and he will blush at the idea of harbouring intentions hostile to the peace and happiness of man. He will be obliged to use his reason instead of attempting violence, and thus by free, open, and manly investigation, though a herd of venal Ministers may be hurled from their seats, yet peace, happiness, and virtue (the fair fruits that ripen on the tree of enquiry) will impart their cheering influence through the land.

But, Citizens, this is not all. Severity will recoil on those who make use of it. When you employ force and coercion, the instruments of the system so unwisely adopted may do you more mischief than you dreaded, even from those against whom these instruments were employed. Of this, if report says true, we have a very melancholy instance in the transactions that have taken place relative to the soldiery in *Cork*. Soldiers were first enlisted for what is called the internal defence—that is to say to support the system of coercion at home, and these it appears were afterwards obliged to embark on board certain vessels, contrary to the terms on which they were enlisted, to carry on the system of coercion abroad—To this the troops demurred; the Government became alarmed, at the turbulence and threats of its own favourite agents; and other soldiers were obliged to be poured into the city, to coerce these instruments of coercion, and compel them to embark. What (if report is to be trusted) has been the consequence? The very troops brought into *Cork*, to compel these soldiers to depart to a foreign country, become the scourges of that city and its affrighted neighbourhood—and humanity shudders at the recapitulation of their excesses. The *Morning Post* of yesterday states the circumstance I allude to in brief—that “the most shocking atrocities have been committed. Rape, pillage, murder, and every cru-

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"elty, are said to have been practised on the peaceable inhabitants."

This intelligence rests, it seems, upon the credit of the Irish papers; it has been detailed not only in the *Cork Gazette*, but also in the *Hibernian Journal*: and in the *Morning Chronicle* and *Telegraph* they have given a much fuller account than I have stated. *The Times* have not been silent upon the subject; they presume this day to contradict the report they gave yesterday; and *the Briton* just pretends to doubt it. But it is scarcely possible, that a paper, printed in so small a city as *Cork*, where the inhabitant of one part could not long remain ignorant of what passes in another, could have admitted so circumstantial an account as is there given, if there were no truth in it. Be this as it will, whether this part of the instance can be supported by good evidence, or whether it cannot, the general reasoning, which is more to my purpose, is not affected. Nothing can be more evident than that violence has a tendency to beget violence; and that coercion is an instrument which, like the flail, is apt to recoil upon the heads of those who use it. So that those who foster the system, frequently, in the end, are the victims of the errors they have adopted.

Let us then, Citizens, wisely conclude that redress is better than punishment: and that all *pretended cures*, that do not eradicate the evil, are in reality aggravations rather than remedies. You stifle, by quackery, for a while, the flame of disease; but, if the glowing embers remain behind, it will burst out again; and the relapse is more dangerous than the original distemper. Nay sometimes, from mismanagement, the Doctor himself is the worst part of the disease. So in political cases, if there are existing grievances in the country, if there are real calamities, and those calamities are deeply seated in the corruptions which have stolen in and contaminated the vitals of its Constitution; let us be well assured, that so long as you refuse to reform those abuses, though gallowses should be erected in every street, you only compel those whom you wish to coerce, to make you still go on further in violence and coercion, till, at last, your system becomes so odious in the eyes of mankind, that humanity can tolerate it no longer.

Lord *Bacon*, whom I quoted before, has a very emphatic observation in the aforesaid essay, which is very much to my purpose; and therefore I quote it to you: and some persons may, perhaps, be more disposed to pay attention to the maxim  
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when it is presented in the language of a philosopher of the *sixteenth*, than in that of a political lecturer of the *eighteenth* century. "The surest way," says he, (p. 80.) "to prevent seditions (if the times do bear it,) is to take away the matter of them; for if there be fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the spark shall come that shall set it on fire." And, to shew how unwise it is to trust to any of these imperfect and quack remedies, (whether of coercion, or what not,) which produce a temporary suppression of these discontents, without removing the causes of them, he also very justly observes, (p. 82.) "Neither let any prince or state be secure concerning discontents, because they have been often, or have been long, and yet no peril hath ensued; for as it is true that every vapour or fume doth not turn into a storm, so it is nevertheless true, that storms, though they blow over divers times, yet may fall at last, and, as the Spanish proverb noteth well, *the cord breaketh at the last by the weakest pull.*" Let us then remember that, if coercion had even been successful, yet we ought to consider the sedition as stifled, not as quelled; and the very success of the system would be a sort of argument against its continuance.

If then it be only by removing the causes of discontents that seditions and troubles can be prevented, let us proceed to enquire what these causes are. In doing this, I shall have to dwell in particular on the picture of the condition of the lower orders of society. I shall then trace this misery to its immediate cause—the inadequate rewards of labour; the scandalous disproportion between which, and the prices of the necessaries of life, I shall shew to be rendered still more calamitous to the common people, by the decline of that system of liberality and hospitality which was once the boast of the English nobility and the great proprietors of the land, ere every claim to liberality and real grandeur yielded to the inroads of Corruption, Luxury, and Licentiousness. I shall afterwards have occasion to take into consideration the national debt, and the constantly increasing burthen of taxes—those fruits of the blessed system of Corruption, which it has lately been thought high treason to assail. The disgraceful system of *Rotten Boroughs* will not pass without its share of animadversion in this discussion;—a system which has done so much towards debauching the morals of every class of men, from the most wealthy aristocrat who revels in luxurious splendor, to the poorest peasant who toils like a slave in the fields to support the imperious grandeur that tramples him



in the dust.—I shall then endeavour to point out the connexion between them, and the tendency which all these causes have had to produce fermentation, instead of tranquillity, in the public mind. I shall also endeavour to shew, that, if immediate reform do not remove the danger, we are on the brink of calamities still more grievous;—calamities from which, I believe, we have no other means to redeem ourselves, than by promoting a thorough reform in the representation of the people, and procuring a restoration of the popular right in the appointment of their respective agents of the constitution.

You will perceive, at once, that it is impossible I should go through the whole of this extensive subject in one night; and it may be taken for granted, that there will be considerable inequalities in the manner in which I shall handle the respective parts. No man can periodically command that energy of mind, and flow of spirits, necessary to give full force and expression to the ideas he wishes to inculcate; but, from the mass of materials which I have collected, I think I may venture to promise thus much,—that each of the Lectures, into which I shall divide this subject, will contain at least some facts not unworthy of your attention, and which may tend to throw some degree of light on the subject I am treating.

I proceed, then, immediately to consider the part of the subject intended for the present evening; namely, the immediate Cause of the existing Disturbances.—This immediate Cause, I believe, we have found to be the distresses among the *lower orders of the community*; for so, according to the present system, we are to regard those worthy and excellent members of the community, the real pillars of the state, by whose toil we are fed, and by whose valour we are protected.

That the distresses and misery of the people are the principal causes that produce disturbances, is a fact which has been discovered and laid down by the philosophers of elder times. Bacon, in particular, (p. 80.) says, that “the *matter of seditions* “is of two kinds—*much poverty*, and *much discontentment*.”—Please to observe, that this is a little contrary to the maxims of modern aristocrats. Our drivers would persuade us, that the only way to keep the labourer in proper subordination, is to keep him poor and miserable. To retain the wretched low-born herd in a state of absolute vassalage, is the only way, say they, to preserve the peace; and they can only be so retained by penury and ignorance. But how is this illustrated  
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by present experience? It is long, I believe very long, since so general a disposition to turbulence has manifested itself among this common herd, as they are called; and yet it is equally long, I believe, since so large a portion of them went with hungry bellies.

For further illustration, let us look again to *Ireland*. Is not *Ireland*, according to ministerial accounts, in a state yet more alarming? and yet *Ireland* is in still greater ignorance and misery than England. In short, if it were not for the extreme assurance with which these doctrines (or arguments which in reality amount to these doctrines) are frequently advanced, by unfeeling Greatness and its ruffian retainers, they would not be worth the formality of refutation. For if it is really true, and I should suppose nothing less than a Prime Minister could have the blindness to doubt it, that a tradesman would be better pleased with the government of the country, when he is getting rich under its protection, than when war and taxation are driving him to bankruptcy, and his family to a workhouse, how is it possible that the discontents of the people should be proportioned to the causes they have to be well contented? And if these maxims of state, so incessantly reiterated by *Pittites* and *Burkites*, *Reevites* and *Wyndhamites*, are indeed supported by the experience of mankind, how came that foolish dreaming philosopher, Lord Bacon, to be held in such esteem? And how comes it that, in the midst of this general misery that devours us, the people are so far from being the tame and complacent beings they are wished, that *English soldiers* can no longer be trusted to keep *Englishmen* in order—nor *Irish soldiers*, *Irishmen*—nor *Scotch*, *Scots*; but that you must juggle and shuffle them together, like a pack of cards in the hands of a swindling gamester, in hopes that the knaves of one suit may knab the better cards of another?

But let us return to this sometime-thought philosopher Bacon. This same foolish dreaming politician says (*Essays*, p. 31.) “And if this poverty and broken estate, in the better  
“fort, be joined with a want and necessity in the mean  
“people, the danger is imminent, and great. For the re-  
“bellions of the belly are the worst!”—*The rebellions of the belly the worst!*—Strange delusion!—Why, it should seem that this supposed philosopher Bacon would not have been able to understand the sublime policy of reducing ten millions of people to the brink of famine in one country, in order at once to pinch and wring all sedition out of their stomachs, and effect the starvation of twenty-four millions more in another.

Again,



Again, this same musty philosopher, among other things, seems as if he were bent upon the mad and foolish project of persuading ministers that it is dangerous to levy too much money upon the people by the imposition of taxes. This part of his argument, however, if it ever had any weight, must have less and less every year—less, for example, this, than the last; for though the demands have become so much greater, yet there is reason to believe their actual levy will be somewhat less; and, if things go on in their present career, I believe, by and by, we shall have no cause of complaint of this sort: we shall pay no taxes at all, having nothing left to pay them with; for you know, Citizens, I have frequently had occasion to shew you, that, however freely *John Bull* may bleed, and however patient an animal he may be, he cannot possibly have more blood taken from his veins than there is in them.

*Bacon*, however, goes on to observe, that “the causes and motions of sedition are *innovation in religion*,”—or, he might have added, political exclusions on account of religious opinions.—“Taxes, alterations of laws and customs” (such for instance, as making *Truth* a libel, and *Argument* high treason, in open defiance of the statute of the 25th Edward III. the only Law of Treasons to which we ought to pay any attention!) “the alterations of customs,” (such as the introduction of systems of inquisition, that fill every house with spies, and every corner of the streets with informers, and thus subjecting a once free people to the most detestable slavery of the worst parts of *Italy*!) “Alterations of customs; breaking of privileges; general oppression; advancement of unworthy persons,”—(such, for example, as making a mere *Wha wants me?* one of the principal ministers of state; or a sleepy-headed booby of a lord, who cannot say *Boo!* to a goose, even when he sees his own shadow in a looking-glass, First Lord of the Admiralty,

“At that damned board, where yet he ne’er could learn  
“Of ships the difference ’twixt the head and stern.”

merely on account of family relationship.

To these causes, *Bacon* adds “Deaths, Disbanded Soldiers,” and the like.

Now, Citizens, of the circumstances thus mentioned as causes of seditions, troubles and insurrections, a great part,  
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at least, appear to exist in this country at this time. I think, therefore, if these axioms are all put together, the conclusion will be, that the way to restore peace to society is, not to string men together by dozens, who never saw each other's faces, in indictments for imaginary treasons—it is not to make Pop-gun Plots and Game-cock Seditions—it is not by these, but by timely and radical reformation of existing abuses, that peace and tranquillity are to be restored: and, though you may keep the common people ignorant of principles, and the true means of redress, by these coercive measures, you cannot keep them ignorant of the extent of the evil, inasmuch as relates to the misery they suffer.

It is a great mistake of ministers and aristocrats to suppose, or *pretend*, that seditious declaimers can make men believe they are miserable, when in reality they are happy. I should like, for my part, for the curiosity of it, to hear the man whose eloquence could persuade a man who had just filled his belly that he was still very hungry; or could convince the peasant, who was half famished, that there was no occasion for him to taste food.—As for punishing seditious declaimers, as they are called, for pointing out the *causes* of the calamities, (which indeed is all that argument can do,) you might as well punish the physician for pointing out to his patient the causes of his disorder, as if the discovery of the origin were in reality the creation of the disease.

A few disturbed imaginations may, perhaps, be agitated here and there—a few fantastic individuals may be found, who will credit falsehoods, because dressed in the garb of declamation: but these are too few, too flighty, and too frivolous, to give any rational alarm; and I believe it is equally impossible for all the declaimers in the world to make the people believe they are miserable, while they are living in ease and abundance, as it is for all the eloquence of the Treasury Bench to convince them that they are happy and flourishing, when they are in a state of absolute starvation.

But it is said, that it is clear that these seditions proceed from mere infatuation and artful delusion, because they always begin with the ignorant and common people, who are evidently most easily played upon.—Hear what Dr. *Davenant* says on this subject: “the common people are the first to  
“ *complain* of misgovernment, and the first to *feel* the bad effects of it; long wars are carried on at the expence of  
“ their blood; heavy taxes pinch them most; revenues are  
“ mismanaged



"mismanaged at their cost; they soonest feel the decay of trade, and the nation's poverty." *Pol. Works, vol. 2. p. 57.* This was the language of an honest Member of Parliament, at the beginning of the reign of Queen Anne: for then we sometimes had an honest Member of Parliament: and though I believe there are many political errors in his writings, yet they breathe this sort of conviction, that the way really to enrich the country is not to throw all advantages into the hands of a few individuals, but to make the majority comfortable and happy: and that having thus laid the foundation of general prosperity, you may then build your superstructure of national grandeur, without fear of its tumbling into ruin.

Do you want any evidence of the truth of the passage I have just quoted? If you do, let me appeal to the city of *Norwich*; that once flourishing mart of trade and manufacture. The number of inhabitants is estimated at only 40,000, and yet 25,000 of these have been obliged to claim relief from the hand of charity; the poor rates are twelve or thirteen shillings in the pound. Remember, it is upon the middling orders of society that the great burthen of this oppression falls; it being very easily proved that, in every large city, the rich furnish a much smaller proportion of the maintenance of the poor than the middling orders; because the rich live together in the same neighbourhoods, while the poor and middling orders are huddled together, and therefore the parishes in which the rich are not to be found, are those in general which have the heaviest poor's rate to pay. But this rate, heavy as it is, is not the whole of the burthen. There have been voluntary subscriptions, also, to a very large amount, to afford charitable relief to the poor of this city. But what is this which we call charity? What is this ostentation of humanity which enrolls our names in lists of subscription and builds palaces for the reception of our poor? What do we do more, after all, than a *partial* act of *Justice*? What do we more (to confess the fact in plain and simple terms) than render in ostentation a pretended charity, a part of that compensation to useful industry, the whole of which we are called upon by justice to afford?—It is the duty of every member of society to see that the laborious classes of mankind are enabled to maintain themselves, in comfort and abundance, by their labours; and shame, shame on that Being who can call himself a man, while, wallowing himself in wealth and superfluity, he suffers those from whose labour every thing is derived,

rived, to pine in abject penury and distress. Short of this, all that we call charity is insult; and even this is nothing more than justice.

I remember I was once talking to a friend of the charity and benevolence exhibited in this country, when stopping me with a sarcastic sneer, "Yes," says he, "we steal the goose, and we give back the giblets." "No," said the third person, who was standing by, "giblets are much too dainty for the common herd, we give them only the pen feathers."

But Norwich is not the only place in which this misery prevails; in the parish of *Mary-le-bone*, as I am informed by an inhabitant of that district, seven hundred and fifty families, no one of which ever received charity before, were obliged to claim relief from the contributions let on foot there, during one week in January last. Now if this is not an instance of growing misery and calamity, I should be glad to know what is.

Nor is the evil of a partial nature. Let any old man, who has been used to view the state of society for years, call to his recollection the very different appearance which the children of labourers and mechanics wear now from what they did in former times. Let me send you, for example, to the east end of the town—to the neighbourhood of Spital-fields. Even in my short remembrance, bare-foot ragged children loitering about in that part of the town were very rare; and I had some opportunities of observation; having been in my boyish days intended for a trade connected with the manufacture carried on in that part of the town.

Citizens, this wretchedness is not confined to children only: for, to the honour of human nature be it spoken, for one instance of an inhuman unfeeling parent you have at least ten who will debar themselves of the common necessities of life, that their children may have such comfort as their scanty lot will afford them.

I remember the time, myself, when a man who was a tolerable workman in the fields, had generally, besides the apartment in which he carried on his vocation, a small summer-house and a narrow slip of a garden, at the outskirts of the town, where he spent his *Monday*, either in flying his pigeons, or raising his tulips. But those gardens are now fallen into decay. The little summer-house and the *Monday's* recreation are no more; and you will find the poor weavers and their families crowded together in vile, filthy and unwholesome chambers, destitute of the most common comforts,



and even of the common necessities of life. This, it is true, is in part to be attributed to the caprices of fashion and the decline in the consumption of silk goods. But it arises still more eminently from there being no set of men in the representative branch of the legislature, who feel it their interest, and particularly duty, to look to the condition of the common people, and preserve a just proportion between the price of their wages and the price of the necessities of life. They are languishing in misery, want and distress! But methinks I hear some great and mighty ruler, or some friend of these great and mighty rulers, demand what business have these wretches to make holiday every Monday? I answer, just as much as those who put the question have to make holiday every day in the week.—I know very well that there must be gradations in society, but the more imperceptible those gradations the better; and certainly I could wish to see none so low, so lost in the depths of misery and oppression, that no comfort or enjoyment is left to them; even the consequence of their amelioration should be that none should be lifted so high as to be out of the reach of responsibility or justice. I wish not to impress any ideas of equalizing property; but I wish every man to feel that the blush of shame and conscious guilt should rise on his cheek, when he wallows in luxury at the expence of those but for whose labour neither luxury nor abundance could exist.

Citizens, I shall not dwell upon details at this time; nor delineate the pictures of misery I have witnessed. Let me employ the few minutes, during which I shall detain you, in removing from your minds some of those prejudices which are so frequently played upon, in order to prevent the humane, and benevolent from exerting themselves with generous enthusiasm in behalf of this oppressed and injured part of the community. We are told, forsooth, that the miseries and calamities of the lower orders arise from their own untoward dispositions—that their profligacy, drunkenness, and luxury are such that amendment is impossible.

Oh Citizens! Citizens! can this charge possibly be examined for a moment and be believed? Are you really so lost in prejudice as to suppose that there exists any difference between man and man, but that which springs from the accident that lifts one on high and depresses another? Could the poor labourer have been put to his own free choice, he would, perhaps, rather have been the offspring of some of those high and wealthy potentates, who now look down upon him with contempt. But he was born to a situation which made labour  
necessary

necessary for his subsistence: and if he has fallen upon times that make labour dishonourable—if he has fallen upon times when misery is the portion of the labourer, these are his misfortunes not his faults!

Citizens, that there are particular vices which belong to the lower orders of society, for the sake of argument, I will for a moment admit. But if it be so whence does it proceed? Does not the very statement point out their degradation and depression as the cause of these vices?—Remove then the cause and the effect will cease. But this depravity, it is said, is constantly increasing; and the present generation, so loud in their cry for reform, are more depraved, as individuals, than any that have gone before. If it be really so—if we are really to consider the laborious classes of the present generation as more profligate than those of preceding ages, let us ascribe the phenomenon to its real cause—to the corruption among those who direct the government of the country, and the consequent increase of misery among the people; and let us remember that this, instead of an objection, is an additional argument in favour of immediate reform.

But, Citizens, let us compare these classes with the higher orders of society; and I believe the labouring poor will find no occasion to blush at the comparison. Look first of all below you, Citizens; and then look above: nay look as high as you please. Cast your eyes to the very top of the ladder; and tell me what reason you have to believe that those, who stand upon the very highest spokes, have any original advantages, either of intellect or virtue, over those who hold all fast at the bottom. If no evidence of such *original* difference exist, the immediate conclusion is, that any subsequent difference, if real, must spring from the neglect and depression we are endeavouring to rectify; and, consequently, that we ought to lend all our efforts, heart and hand, to prevent mankind from being thrust below as we now behold them.

Let us then, Citizens, disdain that narrow-minded prejudice, which first of all reduces men to misery, and then reproaches them with crimes which that misery produced. Remember that it is our duty to promote the happiness of our fellow beings, and to give them the opportunity of living in more comfort, of receiving more information; and that thus we shall improve at once their individual happiness, and those moral feelings from which the happiness of others may be improved.

No man makes use of the argument I have just attempted to controvert, but he thereby confesses, that the only way to prevent mankind from being profligate and depraved



praved, is to mend their condition in society; and this amendment can, I believe, only be effected by a reformation of the political abuses that have crept into our constitution; and restoring to the people their unalienable and constitutional rights of annual Parliaments and universal suffrage.

### THE STATE COACH.

The following article appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* 29th Sept. It is not now transplanted into this corner in exultation at the partial fulfilment of this prophecy, in the last stanza. No man more seriously deprecates violence than myself: for no man is more aware how anxious Corruption is to make the actions of the worst men a pretence for destroying the best. The only reason for reprinting it, in addition to its convenience for filling up the page, is that it unfolds the real cause of the violence and commotions by which the nation has been afflicted. J. T.

YOUR Coach of State doth lack repair—

How could it last so long without it!

Your Coachman, BILL, bestows no care,

But might and main resolves to scout it.

Into the filthiest mire he dashes,

Where none but Swine unclean wou'd welter;

Through thick and thin JOHN BULL he lashes,

The State-Coach follows helter-skelter:

Its springs are broke, its wheels are clogg'd,

The body totters on its axis;

Yet onward still JOHN BULL is flogg'd,

And drags a world of debt and taxes.

Across him HAL Postillion rides,

And laughs, and swears, and jokes, and spurs him;

The beast bemoans his galled sides,—

HAL chinks his gold, nor stops to curse him.

BILL, not content, a pack of thieves

Next hires (their names I need not tell ye),

To worry BULL an order gives,

Some fleece his back, some pinch his belly.

A gang of Foreign Sharpers too,

To rob the Coach with skill contend;

BILL's thanks to each, he owns, are due,

The greater rogue, the more his friend.—

Full many a sage discreet forewarns

Rash BILLY of impending danger,

Reminds the youth that Bulls have horns—

That to their use JOHN BULL's no stranger.

That should he fall among the Swine,

The greedy hogs might overpower him;

Besmeared with dirt, and soaked in wine,

As sav'ry food, they might devour him.

In vain—BILL scorns to quit the box

Till BULL enrag'd shall turn his tether;

And then—who'll wonder if he knocks

State-Coach and Driver down together?

## THE TRIBUNE, N<sup>o</sup>. XXX.

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On the Causes of the CALAMITIES and DISTURBANCES that afflict the Nation. *Part the Second—Including a Vindication of the moral CHARACTER of the LABORIOUS POOR, against the insulting Calumnies of their OPPRESSORS; with Sketches of the starving Misery of the BRITISH PEASANTRY.* Delivered at the LECTURE ROOM, Sept. 25, 1795.

CITIZENS,

I Concluded the Lecture on Wednesday evening with some animadversions on the calumnies which are so frequently thrown on the character of the lower orders of society. But it appears to me that it is not right to pass over that part of my subject, in so slight a manner; because those who wish to prevent a further diffusion of the rights and liberties of mankind, and of the knowledge necessary to such diffusion, have generally sheltered themselves under this subterfuge—that the vices and depravity of the common people render it totally impossible for them to be benefited by more liberal institutions; and would refer to this want of morality among these classes, all those disturbances which occasionally break out in this and every other country.

Let us then examine this subject, and see how far these calumnies are well founded: because, if it be really true, that the industrious part of the community are persons unworthy of the same advantages with others, a great part of my arguments will fall to the ground; and I shall not be able to prove that the late disturbances have entirely originated in the calamities of the country; and that the calamities have originated in the corruptions which have crept into the state and sapped the foundation of all that is dear and glorious in the constitution of Britain.

Let us compare a little the moral character of this despised, oppressed, and injured part of our fellow beings, with  
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the other classes of society: and if we find that they are by no means that set of beings which their oppressors are anxious to represent them; but that vices and virtues are common to all the different orders of society, we shall be bound to pronounce this judgment—that if they are even worse than those who abuse them, it must arise simply from the circumstance of their depression; and that if they are not worse, they have a right to some indulgence, for if we can bear the vices of the great, we ought also to bear with the vices of the little, especially when we consider that they are made so little by the vices and oppressions of the former.

Admitting, I say, for the present, that the moral character of the laborious orders of society is in reality worse than that of the other ranks, what conclusion could possibly be drawn from this, unless another conclusion could be linked with it, that it was inherent in the nature of their being, and did not spring from their situation; and that therefore we ought to consider it as the dispensation of Providence, that those who bore this original sin about them should be hewers of wood and drawers of water, while those who look no more like men than themselves, but who have a certain aristocracy of intellect and moral feeling infused into them by the divine spirit of transmitted property, or the magic influence of hereditary institutions, are thus lifted to a rank to which the more unfortunate plebeian can have no claim.

But can we believe that the laborious part of mankind are more depraved than their indolent *superiors*? or can we believe the old woman's cant with which our nurseries and our pulpits are continually resounding, that the world is growing worse and worse? and that depravity is growing upon us, day after day, till every thing but the show of man is lost?

If we were really to admit this original difference of classes, if we really saw that marrying with a plebeian brought forth only a brood of mules, who could never afterwards perpetuate their race, aristocracy, indeed might arrogate something from the argument. But if this cannot be supported, then what force is there in the objection about the depravity of the laborious poor, but what must support my side of the question, instead of that in which it is advanced. This would indeed shew us the most odious picture of the system of starvation, for it would prove, that this depression is equally fatal to the morals and the condition of man.

They

They must be kept in subjection, we are told; we must not pamper their appetites, for fear they should grow insolent and unruly, believe no longer what the priest asserts, nor do any longer what their lordly masters command. But, if it is true that the peasantry of the present day are not to be compared for moral virtue and good demeanor, with those of the glorious days of the good queen Bess, as she is called, how does all this hold together?—It has been proved from this Tribune, that, at the beginning of her reign, the common price of one day's labour was equal to the price of two fat pigs, whereas now no fat pig is ever permitted to sinoak in the nostrils of the profane multitude. And yet aristocrats tell us, that turbulence, dissatisfaction, and immorality, are much more common now, than in those days of insolent prosperity and abundance.—If it is also true that soldiers, in the time of *Edward the Third*, were less disposed to mutiny than at present, here is another most blessed proof of the benign influence of the system of Starvation; for the soldiers have been also proved, by historical quotations, to have received at that time equal to what five shillings per day would have been fifty years ago, (which was the time when *Hume* wrote,) and equal therefore to considerably more at this time. If therefore they be, as is asserted, more unruly and turbulent at present than formerly, where are the blessed consequences of the present system of depressing them lower and lower?—If, in short, the lower classes be less worthy of esteem and veneration than they were in former ages, this is an incontrovertible argument why you should devise measures to restore them once more to that comfort they formerly enjoyed, and which ought now to be still more amply dispensed, under the improved, glorious, flourishing, and happy constitution, under which, since the Revolution in 1688, we have so boastfully lived.

But, Citizens, the whole of this calumny is totally unfounded. It is not true, that, in the language of Spencer,

“ This world is winding, in a common course,  
 “ From good to bad, from bad to that is worse.”

It is not true, that the common class of mankind have all this aggravated vice to answer for. The fact is, that the moral characters of men are stamped, not by the quantity of reward they receive for their labour, but by the degree of information which is prevalent among them.



Brutality and violence will be the prevailing feature of every people, in what country, soil, or climate soever, where man is nursed in ignorance. There turbulent passions will be his only guide; and acting only from that stimulus, he will be raised but little above the level of the brute, who, stung by hunger, roves from place to place, seeking what he may devour. This is the characteristic of Ignorance and Barbarism: and, if you look at the early history of this and every country, you will find the most incontrovertible evidence of the truth of the picture. But, when the sun of Reason begins to dawn—when the light of Truth diffuses itself over the land—that Truth, whose hand-maid is Virtue, and whose offspring is Liberty—the moral character of nations, generally speaking, is considerably improved.

I am very well aware, that there are certain circumstances that counterbalance this tendency to moral improvement, with respect to particular classes and individuals: I am well aware, that it is not uniformly the case, that the man who is most enlightened will have the best moral character. Not instruction itself can always counteract the ill effects of baneful institutions, which dispose men to a listlessness of disposition, unnerve the soul, and plunge the apparently favoured being into a sink of vice, degeneracy and corruption, more odious than all the barbarous ignorance of the most uncultivated ages.

I do not, therefore, mean to apply the argument I am now making use of, to individuals universally, nor to the higher orders of society. With them, the improvement of intellect has long been at a stand, and morality has been long declining; because they are cursed with the debilitating conviction that they can command outward respect at least, knee-worship, and tongue-service, without either those virtues, or that wisdom, which is necessary to lift the plebeian from the dust, and procure him that esteem which is the wish of every honest and generous mind.

Citizens, it will be my attempt to prove, during this course of lectures, that the present institutions of society are equally baneful to the virtue and to the happiness of the higher, as of the lower, orders of society: those institutions, which trample the poor labourer into the dust of insult, slavery, and cruel injustice, contaminate the heart, debauch the understanding, and undermine the principles of those proud oppressors, who swell to unwieldy opulence by their depression and wretchedness.

Yet,

Yet, in defiance of the exceptions which arise from these causes, the maxim I have laid down will hold good. The nation that is most enlightened will possess the greatest quantity of virtue. It may also possess the greatest quantity of vice, among those few who are privileged beyond the necessities of mental exertion and moral rectitude: as was the case in France. There, one of the most conspicuous consequences of intelligence, and refinement, was, for a long time, that a large body of proud luxurious beings, decorated with titles (as if the only intention was to shew how insignificant titles are, and to what beings they can sometimes belong) were privileged to trample every sacred principle of morality and justice under foot, and to grind the people to powder under the mill-stones of their oppression. Such, indeed, were the *nobles* of enlightened France—O! most ignoble beings indeed! for 70,000 of them, we are told, ran away at once, terrified by the grim and formidable countenances of the enraged *Sans Culottes*, and came crying to England, begging and praying that the Aristocrats of this country would plunge into a mad and ridiculous crusade, which may send them, perhaps, ere long, to Russia or Arabia on the same errand.—You will remember, Citizens, that I am prophecying, and not praying: it is the inspiration of the prophetic spirit that I yield to, not the fervour of devout petition for the fulfilment of the prediction. That such an intelligent, virtuous, enlightened, useful order of men, as the nobility of this country, should be sent packing, it is impossible that I should ever wish. No, Citizens, let us but get rid of our placemen, our pensioners, our sycophants, our commissaries and contractors, and the old ladies who wrap themselves up in scarlet cloaks may sleep in undisturbed security.

There are many circumstances, which, at the same time that they increase the opportunities of mental improvement, increase also the opportunities of luxurious gratification. A nation has but little opportunity for either, till it has obtained a considerable degree of perfection in the necessary and laborious arts of life. Then only it is, that people have leisure and inclination to cultivate the improvements introduced into society by literature and scientific information: and I think there can be no difficulty in proving that the progress of information has commonly produced a progressive advancement in the general standard of human character. If you look back to barbarous ages, and compare the state of intellect with the state of morals, in this country, in those times, when  
great



great and mighty potentates, reverend bishops, and illustrious peers, were permitted by express act of parliament to claim the benefit of clergy although they should not be capable to write, you will see that the moral character has kept pace with the intellectual; and that the mass of the people of Britain are now much more worthy of esteem and liberty, than the highest ranks of men among those barbarous ancestors to whom ignorance sometimes looks up with such blind admiration. I am sorry however to add, that all the advantages of this improved state of society seem to be exclusively engrossed by those classes of beings who have contributed little to the common improvement; and whose morals appear to have received the smallest portion of this amelioration.

But citizens, we need not be surprised at the calumny which those who have all power in their hands, and therefore cannot be punished for the abuse of it, lavish on those who have no power at all, and who therefore may be punished for telling them the truth. These privileged classes though not themselves very famous for works of genius, have, in a considerable degree held not only the sword but the pen. For money will make the pen to go as well as the mare: nay, power and patronage will command it without the assistance of money: and therefore it is, that more than one half of the romances which are sent into the world under the denomination of histories, political surveys, views of society and *morals*, topographical descriptions, and the like, are stuffed with nothing but servile adulations and time-serving misrepresentations, to gloss over the conduct and characters of the higher, and calumnious abuse and false descriptions of the lower orders—calculated to steel the hearts of the readers against them. And thus it is that they render their productions pleasing to those great men who can recompence them with sinecure places and pensions.

Topographers in particular, whom we generally consult, to learn the real condition of the people, will be found guilty of this offence in the most abject degree. Every fact is misrepresented, and the grossest falsehoods are foisted upon us to make their court, forsooth, to the great men who have proud mansions in those neighbourhoods they describe. For they know very well that there is nothing to be got by pleading the cause of the swinish multitude.

Thus it is, that the *laborious* ranks of the community have had so many calumniators, and the *indolent* so many apologists. Were we *Lions* painters, says the *Lion* in the *fable*, how many

many pictures could we exhibit to you of men who were torn to pieces by lions, for this one of an opposite nature of which you are so proud. Chaucer speaks to the same purpose in his Wife of Bath's prologue:

"Perdie, If women had written stories,  
 "As men have, in their oratories,  
 "They would have told of men more wrckedness,  
 "Than all the works of Adam would redress."

In modern English thus:

By heaven if women had written histories as men have, they would have told more bad actions than all the sons of Adam could retaliate on their heads.

Thus then the powerful orders have the opportunity of painting the common people in whatever light it suits them; and to the disgrace of literature it has hardly ever happened that any man of considerable talents has had the disinterestedness and independence of mind to enlist himself in the service of the latter. But I believe, if characters were fairly delineated, there would have been few lords or great ministers of state, who might not blush at the comparison between the two pictures of luxurious affluence and laborious indigence.

Citizens, there is another reason, why the comparison has been drawn so unfavourable to the laborious part of the community: it must be admitted, that though the industrious poor are not in reality more vicious than the higher orders, yet there is some degree of difference in the kind of vices into which they respectively fall: and we are always inclined to think those vices the greatest which we have no opportunity of committing, or no particular inclination to commit. Butler says, in his Hudibras—

"We compound for sins we are inclin'd to,  
 "By damning those we have no mind to."

But after all, the difference is rather in the manners than the thing, in the extent of luxury with which those views are gratified, than in the nature of the vices themselves.

It is very true, that the poor peasant may now and then be found out in some *faux pas* with the farmer's maid in the barn, and will be exposed accordingly to the severity  
 of



of *impartial* justice, whilst his wealthy landlord, who knows how to hide such irregularities from the eyes of the world, satisfies his inclinations by debauching beneath the canopy of splendor, the wife or daughter of his bosom friend: the mechanick, it is true, will sometimes be found reeling from the alehouse intoxicated with the vulgar fumes of a liquor, which it would shock the ears of this polite auditory to name; while the great lord reels nightly from the tavern with half a dozen of claret or champagne in his head, and escapes from censure, or at least from chastisement.

These are the pleasures of a gentleman; they are not of that low, base, vulgar kind in which the plebeian, now and then, and but rarely, indulges himself because he can afford no better. The poor countryman also indulges himself sometimes perhaps, in drinking his pot of fivepenny ale instead of paying a trifling score he has run at the chandler's shop; but the illustrious potentate drinks his *Tokay* at *five guineas* a bottle at the very time when he is calling on his tenants and neighbours, in addition to the exorbitant rent they afford him, to subscribe thousands upon thousands, to enable him to enter into a composition with his creditors and secure the payment of their demands in twelve or fourteen years.

It must be admitted also, Citizens, that the labouring poor are sometimes guilty of pilfering a stick, or so, from the hedges and fences of their landlords, or perhaps of breaking down a pale or digging up a post for fuel, to warm their shivering limbs. But the Statesman and imperious Lord never steal sticks from hedges, nor pales from fences. No: they commit no felonies—they satisfy themselves—they do things in stile; and the worst that they can be accused of, in this way, is only desolating whole nations, and plundering their country by millions at a time:—Actions which, as there is no law powerful enough to correct, cannot be set down in the catalogue of crimes.

There is also another cause for the very unjust character which is given by the opulent ranks to the laborious part of the community. They draw their information from polluted sources, and a contracted survey of human society. It is true that people of rank, as they are called, are not shut up, like sultans, in the seraglios of the east; but they are kept in almost as much ignorance:—If they travel, it is inclosed in a vehicle of modern luxury, called a coach or a post-chaise, and the only persons they converse with, except the pageants of  
their

their own cast, are the innkeepers and postillions on the road. At home, they remain in equal ignorance of the real character of the peasant and artificer: the former stands trembling in his presence, and with the latter he scarcely ever encounters: so that his ideas of the characters of the poor is derived from the lacquies, panders, and low retainers, who hover about the scenes of their debaucheries, and whom their own luxurious vices have corrupted. In short, the class of the poor they know any thing about, is that small and really despicable set of vagabonds, who are no where to be found but in the purlieus of brothels and gaming-houses, and other seminaries of vice, which spring from the luxuries and dissipation of great cities,

These are the unfortunate beings I, would fain have the candour to believe, whom they falsely consider as the representatives of the whole of the common people, when they call them a pack of profligates and wretches. And wretched enough indeed they are. But who made them so wretched? Who made them so profligate? Could such beings as I am now describing—men that sleep on bulks, and loiter in loathsome recesses, without visible occupation or permanent residence—could such poor calamitous outcasts as these exist to infest society, if it were not for the luxurious vices of the higher classes, which first brought them into so degraded a situation?

But if from this scanty number—this refuse of debauchery—a class of beings, who never yet were found in any well ordered, well organized society, we draw our ideas of the laborious poor, nothing but our ignorance can be pleaded in our excuse. Visit the garret of the artificer, go into the workshops of the manufacturers, go into the cottages of peasants, the proper scenes to teach you the real character of the poor, and I will be bold to say, you will meet with persons of a very different description.

Citizens, a very able writer, (who is certainly no Jacobin, no metaphysical reformer,) has lately stepped forth to vindicate the poor from such infamous calumnies. The person I mean is a Citizen *Davies*, whose book now lies before me.—I say *Citizen Davies*—for although he has some aristocratic prejudices lurking about him, as appears, among other things, from the price of his book, yet I call him Citizen, because I see, in *his* book, virtuous and generous feelings which are of the true *Civic* cast; and by *Citizen* I mean only a member of civilized society whose heart is softened, and whose affections are warmed by a genial love and sympathy for mankind.



This writer will shew you, by facts well substantiated, that the calumnious charge of indolent profligacy, levelled against the industrious poor, are unjust. Nay you need not take his word. You need not depend on his authority. If you will use your own eyes, if you will use your own understandings, you will perceive that though the common people have their foibles, and their vices, it can never be admitted that indolence is one of the number; all that I have heard of negro slaves, and poor wretches condemned to the galleys, does not in point of laborious exertion exceed what I have seen and know of the incessant toils of one industrious part of the community of this country. Do they not labour for twelve, fourteen, sometimes sixteen hours a day, in all sorts of weather, and in all sorts of drudgery, and this for six successive days in every week: and yet there are who can calumniate these men as a set of beings whose profligacy and inattention subject them to the wants and miseries they experience.—Shame on the wretch who can see the most valuable parts of his fellow citizens thus depressed, and hear them thus calumniated, and not stand boldly forth to plead their cause, and risk every thing that man can stake, in the hope of vindicating their rights, and obtaining an amelioration of their condition; but let us turn to the passage I was about to quote to you. You will remember the writer is a Minister of Religion, Rector of *Barkham*, in *Berkshire*. You will not therefore suspect him of making misrepresentations from Jacobinal motives. The clergy do not frequently lean to that side of the question.

“ In visiting the labouring families of my parish, as my  
 “ duty led me, I could not but observe with concern their  
 “ mean and distressed condition. I found them in general  
 “ but indifferently fed; badly clothed; some children with-  
 “ out shoes and stockings; very few put to school; and most  
 “ families in debt to little shopkeepers. In short, there was  
 “ scarcely any appearance of comfort about their dwellings,  
 “ except that the children looked tolerably healthy. Yet  
 “ I could not impute the wretchedness I saw either to sloth  
 “ or wastefulness. For I knew that the farmers were careful  
 “ that the men should not want employment; and had they  
 “ been given to drinking, I am sure I should have heard  
 “ enough of it. And I commonly found the women, when  
 “ not working in the fields, well occupied at home; seldom  
 “ indeed earning money; but baking their bread, washing  
 “ and mending their garments, and rocking the cradle.”

Such

Such is the picture this writer draws of the manners and morals of the industrious poor. I shall presently shew you, from facts in this book, that even if they had the disposition, they have not the means of intoxication and criminal indulgence; and that therefore the charges which we lay upon the whole of the laborious parts of mankind, on account of a dissolute few, are only disgraceful to ourselves.

Citizens, I shall now be obliged to draw your attention to a part of the subject which must necessarily be rather dry. I am going to state to you a few instances of weekly expences and weekly earnings of poor families, collected from diligent enquiry and actual observation, by this Citizen Davies, in 1787. I shall afterwards have occasion to shew to you how considerably these calamities have increased since that time.

In the eighth page are the following statements:

*Accounts of the Expences and Earnings of Six Labouring Families in the Parish of Barkham in the County of Berks, taken at Easter 1787.*

No. I. *Weekly Expences of a Family, consisting of a Man and his Wife, and five Children, the eldest eight years of age, the youngest an Infant.*

	s.	d.
FLOUR 7 gallons and an half, at 10d. <i>per</i> gallon	6	3
Yeast, to make it into bread, two-pence halfpenny;		
and salt one penny halfpenny	0	4
Bacon, 1lb. boiled at two or three times with greens;		
the pot-liquor with bread and potatoes, makes a <i>mess</i>		
for the children	0	8
Tea 1 oz. two-pence;—3 quarters of a lb. of sugar, six-		
pence;—half a lb. of butter or lard, four-pence	1	0
Soap, 1 quarter of a lb. at nine-pence <i>per</i> lb.	0	2½
Candles, 1 third of a lb. one week with another at a		
medium, at nine-pence	0	3
Thread, thrum, and worsted, for mending apparel, &c.	0	3
Total	8	11½

*Weekly Earnings of the Man and his Wife, viz.*

The man receives the common weekly wages eight months in the year

7 0

By task-work the remaining four months he earns something more: his *extra* earnings, if equally divided among the fifty-two weeks in the year, would increase the weekly wages about

1 0

3 A 2

The



The wife's common work is to bake bread for the family, to wash and mend ragged clothes, and to look after the children; but at bean-setting, haymaking, and harvest, she earns as much as comes one week with another to about - - - -

with another to about	-	-	-	-	0	6
					<hr/>	
					Total	8 6
					<hr/>	
Weekly expenses of this family	-	8	11	$\frac{1}{4}$		
Weekly earnings	-	-	-	8	6	
					<hr/>	
Deficiency of earnings	-	-	-	0	5	$\frac{1}{4}$

I have thought it the more proper to state these circumstances in my lectures, because unfortunately aristocratic prejudice has caused this book to be published at the price of half a guinea, which ought to have been sent into the world at so easy a rate; every person in the middling and even humbler spheres of life should have been able to procure it, if we wish that reformation should come peaceably and quietly, it is necessary above all things that the people at large should know what the condition of the respective classes is. It is only by this that a unanimous desire of justice can be produced. It is only by this that we can know what justice in real life requires. It is only by this that corruption can be peaceably removed, and tumult and confusion be prevented: for one part of society being ignorant of the distresses of the other, oppressions are too grievous to be borne, heats and animosities, are the fruits of reciprocal ignorance, and men at last become determined to procure their rights even at a price which they would not wish to pay: for they argue, and perhaps they argue rightly, that it is better to have redress, even at any price, than to go on for ever from misery to misery, from one calamity to another, till the world becomes one desert waste, where horror, tyranny, and desolation, like a bloody triumvirate, exult in the sacrifices made to their ambition.

Thus, in the weekly expences only, you have a deficiency of five-pence farthing. But to these is to be added the weekly proportion of the expences, which are proved, by this accurate observer, to amount to three shillings and a farthing more. There is, therefore, a weekly deficiency of three shillings and five pence halfpenny.

No. II.

## No. II.

*Weekly Expences of a Family, consisting of a Woman, whose Husband is run away, and six Children, the eldest 16 years of age, the youngest 5: four of the Children too young to earn any thing.*

	s.	d.
Flour for bread, 6 gallons, at 10d. per gallon	5	0
Ditto, half a gallon for puddings, and thickening the children's messes	0	5
Yeast for the bread, 2d.; salt three halfpence	0	3½
Bacon, 2lb. at 8d. (with sometimes a sheep's head)	1	4
Tea, one ounce and a half, 4d.; sugar half a pound 4d. butter, half a pound, 4d.	1	0
Soap, something more than a quarter of a pound, at 9d. per lb.	0	2½
Candles, one-third of a pound, one week with another, at 9d. per pound.	0	3
Thread, worsted, &c.	0	3

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Total 8 9

*Weekly Earnings of this Family, with the Parish Allowance.*

This family receives from the parish, weekly,	5	0
The eldest boy earns per week	2	6
The next, aged 13 years, earns, but not constantly	1	6
The mother, (whilst an old woman looks after the younger children, earns, one week with another, about	1	6

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The amount, supposing none of them to lose any time, is 10 6

But some deduction must be made from this sum, because they are an unhealthy family, one or other of them being often laid up with the ague or rheumatism; disorders to which poor people, from low living and working in the wet, are very subject. The woman assures me that their earnings with the parish allowance do not exceed 9s. per week on the average; therefore deduct

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Total of earnings, with the parish allowance 9 0

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Surplus of earnings 0 3

Weekly proportion of annual out-goings 3 2½

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0 3

---

Deficient 2 11½



## No. III.

*Weekly Expences of a Family, consisting of a Man and his Wife, with four small Children, the eldest under 6 years of age, the youngest an Infant,*

	s.	d.
Flour, 6 gallons, at 10d. per gallon	5	0
Yeast, 2d.—salt 1½d.	0	3½
Bacon, 1 lb.	0	8
Tea, 1 ounce, 2d.—sugar, ¼lb. 6d.—butter, ½lb. 4d.	1	0
Soap, ¼lb. 2½d.—candles, ¾d. 3d.—thread, &c. 3d.	0	8½
Total	7	7¼

*Weekly Earnings of the Man and his Wife, viz.*

The husband, if he has constant health and constant employment, earns on an average	8	0
The wife, like No. I, does not earn above	0	6
Total	8	6

Weekly earnings of this family	8	6
Weekly expences	7	7¼

Surplus of earnings 0 10¼

Weekly proportion of annual outgoings	2	10¼
	0	10¼

Deficient 2 0

## No. IV.

*Weekly Expences of a Man and his Wife, with three Children, the eldest under 5 years of age, the youngest an Infant.*

Flour, 3 gallons per week, at 10d.	2	6
Yeast, 1d.—salt 1½d.	0	2½

Bacon: the farmer of whom they rent their dwelling, lets them have a fatted hog, weight about 14 score, (on condition of their not keeping any pigs or poultry) at 1s. per score under the market price: this at 6s. 6d. per score (1787) comes to 4l. 11s. and as it lasts the family the whole year, it is per week exactly

Cheese, about 28lb. at 4½d. per lb; 10s. 6d. per ann.	1	9
—per week	0	2½
Tea,		

Tea, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. per month, at 3s. per lb. per week 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.; sugar, 8d.; butter, 4d.	-	-	1	2
The wife having an infant at the breast, and fancying very small beer better than mere water, brews a peck of malt once a month, which costs 1s. 4d.—hops, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. 4d.—this is per week	-	-	0	5
Soap, 3 lbs. at 9d. per lb. lasts 2 months, this is per week	-	-	0	3
Candles, $\frac{1}{3}$ lb. at a medium, 3d.—thread and worsted 2d.	-	-	0	5
Total			6	11 $\frac{1}{4}$

*Weekly Earnings of this Family, viz.*

The man's business is to follow a farmer's team, for which he has 8s a week throughout the year	-	8	0
He has, besides, either his diet in his employer's house 6 weeks in harvest, or instead of it 18s.; which divided into 52 parts, is <i>per</i> week	-	-	0 4
The wife earns at a medium, about 8d. <i>per</i> week,	-	0	8
Total			9 0

Weekly earnings of this family	-	9	0
Weekly expences	-	6	11 $\frac{1}{4}$

Surplus of earnings 2 0 $\frac{1}{4}$

Weekly proportion of annual outgoings	-	-	2	8 $\frac{1}{4}$
			2	0 $\frac{1}{4}$
		Deficient	0	7 $\frac{1}{2}$

## No V.

*Weekly Expences of another Family, consisting of a Man and his Wife with Three Children, the oldest six Years of Age, the youngest an Infant.*

Flour $\frac{1}{2}$ a sack per month, or nearly 5 gallons per week, say 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ at 10d	-	-	3	9
Yeast and salt	-	-	0	3
Meat, bought a pig and fatted it; price of the pig 10s. 6d. cost 6d. a week for 42 weeks before fattening, 1l. 1s.; was fatted with one sack of beans, 15s. one sack of pease 16s. and 5 bushels of ground barley 25s.; total 4l. 7s. 6d.—When killed it was estimated to weigh about 14 score pounds; it cost				

there-



therefore 6s. 4d. <i>per</i> score ; this, with a few sheeps' heads and shins of beef, will last all the year, and is					
<i>per</i> week	-	-	-	-	1 8
Beer ; they seldom brew but against a christening				0	0
Tea, sugar and butter	-	-	-	1	0
Soap, starch, candles, worsted, on an average	-	-	-	1	0
Total				7	8

*Weekly Earnings of this Family, viz.*

The man has, summer and winter, the common pay, 7s. ; and he has also a mess of milk for breakfast, and small beer worth at least 1s. more	-	-	8	0
The woman earns, as she believes, by washing and needlework, by breeding poultry, and at harvest work, when she has no child to nurse, about 1s.				
<i>per</i> week	-	-	-	1 0
Total			9	0

Weekly earnings of this family	-	9	0
Weekly expences	-	7	8
Surplus of earnings	-	1	4
Weekly proportion of annual outgoings	-	2	8 $\frac{1}{4}$
Subtract		1	4
Deficiency		1	4 $\frac{1}{4}$

No. VI.

*Weekly Expences of a Family consisting of a Man and his Wife, with two young Children, the eldest seven Years of Age, the youngest four.*

	s.	d.
Flour 5 gallons, at 10d.	-	4 2
Yeast and salt	-	0 3
Bacon 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pound, at 8d.	-	1 0
Tea, one ounce, 2d. ; sugar $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. 4d. ; butter $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. 4d.	0	10
Soap $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ; candles 3d ; worsted 3d.	0	8 $\frac{1}{4}$
Total	6	11 $\frac{1}{4}$
		<i>Weekly</i>

*Weekly Earnings of this Family, viz.*

The man earns, one week with another, if constantly employed - - - - - 8 0  
 The woman on an average, not more than - - - - - 0 6

Total 8 6

Weekly earnings of this family 8 6  
 Weekly expences - - - - - 6 11½  
 Surplus of earnings - - - - - 1 9¼

Weekly proportion of annual outgoings, - - - - - 2 6¼

Subtract 1 6¼

Deficiency 0 11½

*N. B.* The weekly expences and earnings of another family, consisting of the same number of persons, are so nearly the same with the above, that it is not worth while to set them down separately.

This was the case at the price provisions bore in 1787. I shall now just mention a few facts, which prove the oppression to be much more grievous at this time.—Since the year 1787, there has been a most rapid increase in the price of provisions. Flour is here stated at ten-pence per gallon. While I was in the Isle of Wight, it was sold at two shillings and three-pence per gallon; so that seven gallons and a half, at two shillings and three-pence per gallon, amount to sixteen shillings and ten-pence halfpenny; while the whole earnings of the man and his wife are but eight shillings and six-pence.—Here you have a deficiency of eight shillings and four-pence halfpenny, even if flour alone were the only article the poor man had to buy. [*A laugh.*]

Citizens, there may be some who are disposed to laugh at this. The circumstance may appear trifling to them, that millions of their fellow-beings, more useful to society than themselves, are pining in absolute want. But such facts ought surely to inspire some sympathy with however little ability such facts may be stated—with however ungraceful a delivery they may be accompanied: and I confess they come from the lips of a man not much used to the statement of mere numerical calculation, who has been more desirous to study the heart—the intellects—the feelings of the human race—than



the *tare* and *tret* by which human life is now to be estimated; and who laments that he is obliged, from the unfeeling neglect of rulers and oppressors, to descend to minute particulars of arithmetic in such a case, that he may drive the nail of conviction into the hard block of a heart which dwells, but too frequently, in the bosom of the proud being we call man.

I know Citizens, that by courting your prejudices, by flattering your individual importance, I can command more of your plaudits; but if I bring conviction to one deluded Aristocrat, if the flame of truth arise in one human bosom from my efforts, take my reputation—tear it into shatters—and let neither my name nor my person be thought of more. I stand up here the advocate of my suffering and miserable fellow-beings, and not to court the applauses which any set of men can possibly confer upon me.

Citizens, since this period the calamity has been monstrously aggravated. We have had, generally speaking, of a glorious and abundant harvest. Yet what is the condition of the poor now? What is the price of bread at this time? What is the comparison between the condition of common people now, and in the year 1787, at which period even the calamities of mankind were calling aloud for relief? At this time our flour is one shilling and ten-pence per gallon. Remember, Citizens, that the gallon loaf is the same as your half-peck. What then is the present condition of the labourer? Our gallon of flour is one shilling and ten-pence—seven gallons and an half amounts to thirteen shillings and nine-pence—the earnings are eight shillings and six-pence—and you have still for bread alone a deficiency of five shillings and three-pence. Such is the portion of every poor unfortunate being whom nature has cursed with servility. He is doomed to feel the anguish of not knowing how to satisfy the hunger of those little infants who cling to his heart, and at every call of want tear the fibres of his existence, and make him curse the hour when he was born, doubly anathematize the hour which proved propitious to his love; but, worst of all, execrate the fatal moment that made his passion fruitful, and gave him children, once the best blessing, now the worst torment of the marriage bed.

But, citizens, to shew you how rapidly, of late, our burthens have increased, and our comforts declined, let us see the alteration which has taken place during the last eight years. We are told in this book that in the year 1787, the earnings of a laborious man and his wife were just hardly sufficient to support

support the existence of themselves and two small children. But what is their condition now? Will their present earnings support them? Will they find them even in bread alone? Alas! when I state the fact, I know the feeling heart will deeply mourn; though perhaps an individual may indulge his levity, where his sympathy ought to be exerted. Every article consumed by every individual is already considerably increased in its price. But let us confine ourselves to bread, for bread and water are the labourers fare at present. Flour instead of 10d. is 1s. 11d. *per* gallon. Five gallons of flour, we are told by this book are requisite for the weekly supply of a man, his wife, and two children. Five gallons at 1s. 11d. amount to 9s. 7d.: add to this article (upon the supposition, which is not true, that nothing else had increased in its price) the other expences, leaving out the scanty morsel of bacon they used to have, and you will find the amount to be 13s. 10d $\frac{1}{2}$ . Now will any man tell me in what county the labouring peasant gets 13s. 10d $\frac{1}{2}$ . a week for his labour? I do not mean to say in the harvest month, but taking all the year into the account for the whole 52 weeks. In very few places indeed is it more than 8s. in none more than 9s.—Taking it here at the average of 8s. 6d. you have a deficiency of 5s. 4d $\frac{1}{2}$ .; or admitting the propriety of such a luxury as a bit of bacon once a week, of 6s. 4d $\frac{1}{2}$  per week, in the means of support for a man and his wife, and even two small children. And where is the well-wisher to his country, who would not wish that every labouring man, should have more than two children? else what is to become of our population—of our strength—of our power—of our very means of existence as a nation. How is the consumption of great cities, of luxury, of war to be supplied? Suffer me to repeat once more—

“ Princes or lords may flourish or may fade,  
 “ A breath may make *them* as a breath has made;  
 “ But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
 “ When once 'tis lost can never be supply'd.

Yet, citizens, will humanity believe it, while I was in the Isle of Wight, a circumstance I have mentioned before, the farmers were disposed to raise the price of labour, and came to a resolution for that purpose, when a certain aristocrat, one of the greatest proprietors of the island, I will not mention his name—I wish to allay personal indignation not excite



it—and to promote general inquiry, not to strike at individuals, who, after all, are the creatures of circumstances, and who if they are base and ungenerous, are made so by circumstances resulting from impolitic institutions. This nameless aristocrat, called a meeting the Sunday following, after service, in the vestry of the church, to shew how much the doctrines he had heard had softened his heart, and used threats and compliments to influence the farmers to alter their resolution; telling them that they would make the common people insolent, and would never be able to reduce their wages again.

Why should they be reduced? when wars, taxes, and the profligate schemes of despotic and corrupt ministers have increased the price of those commodities necessary to the support of life? Does the return of peace ever restore the prices of those commodities to their ancient standard? No! the landed proprietor takes advantage of the rise of the product, to raise the price of his lands, and thus perpetuates the mischief which would otherwise be only temporary.

But there is another circumstance that increases the calamities of those classes of society, I mean the degeneracy of aristocracy with respect to their conduct to their tenants, and the surrounding cottagers: I hope it is no high treason, though it is a certain truth, to say, that our aristocrats are degenerated.

Citizens, I do not mean to stand up as an advocate for the ancient feudal system. The barbarous Barons of elder times, and the system of vassalage charm not me: but let us remember, that if there were vices of very considerable magnitude in the ancient aristocratic body, there were also virtues which made some degree of compensation for them. Brutal ferocity, and rapacity marked their conduct; and they held the surrounding country in miserable dependence upon their greatness: but they considered the whole of their vassals as their family, and thought they shewed their power and grandeur best by their liberality to the industrious, the poor, and the unfortunate. For them the hall of the great man was open, and they could taste at least on particular days the charming beverage of his cellar. Where is this hospitality now? The house of grandeur it is true, invites you by its beautiful appearance; but when you knock at the gate, insulting, suspicious avarice turns you away with bitter disappointment; and thus seems to say—it is reward enough for your

your toil that your eyes partake of the grandeur which your hands produce.

I need only refer you in support of this, to a few facts from Hume's history.—Oh blind and foolish ministers! when you were determined to adopt a system of prosecution and persecution, for the suppression of popular enquiry, why did not you make it high treason to propose to publish histories in cheap editions, like these. Such books, though written by *high-flown* Aristocrats themselves, are strong advocates for reformation.—Such books are pregnant with facts that, if properly known and digested, would hurl Corruption from its high-built seat, and restore the reign of Liberty and Justice.

In what did the power and grandeur of our ancient nobility consist? not in fine coaches and splendid equipages; not in pompous buildings, or lofty colonnades, raised at an immense expence to obscure the mansion they were meant to adorn: no, but in hospitality—in gladdening the heart of the poor, and filling the hungry. “The earl of Warwick, commonly known from the subsequent events, by the appellation of the *King-maker*, particularly distinguished himself by his gallantry in the field, by the hospitality of his table, by the magnificence, and still more by the generosity of his expence and by the spirited and bold manner which attended him in all his actions. The undesigned frankness and openness of his character rendered his conquest over men's affections the more certain and infallible. His presents were regarded as sure testimonies of esteem and friendship; and his professions as the overflowings of his genuine sentiments. No less than 30,000 persons are said to have lived at his board in different manors and castles which he possessed in England.”

This was nobility, this was solid grandeur: unlike the selfish, and tinsel fopperies of modern times. But these were the days of chivalry, and “the days of chivalry,” you have been told, “are gone;” and the days of corruption, of placemen, and borough-mongers are come in their stead.

There is, however, one redress, we shall be told, still left, —though the nobility and rich proprietors open their doors no more with ancient hospitality to their surrounding tenants—though a man is now unable to earn so much bread alone as will supply his wants, yet *the parish offers its generous assistance*, and large contributions are made to supply the poor with rice and potatoes. But is this a proper way to provide for



for those whose industry ought to secure the independent enjoyment of the necessaries of life. Besides, as to parish relief, it is the interest of overseers, who must bear a proportion of the rate, to provide for them as miserably as they can. But what is worse, this charity, as it is called, breaks the spirits of those who ought to derive support from their generous efforts to render fertile that earth, which, without their aid, would be waste and sterile. This drives them, also, frequently to desert their families, and thus increases both the distress and the burthen. Add to this the unjust and unnecessary load accumulated on the shoulders of the middling orders by this system of supplying, by mock charity, what in justice ought to be dispensed as the merited return for labour. A considerable part of what is levied for these purposes never go to the relief of those for whom it was contributed. There are parish feasts, parish jobbs, and parish patronage, as well as feasts, jobbs, and patronage, among statesmen and courtiers. One must have a grand workhouse to build, another must have a new portico to the church, and a third must be employed to paint a cupola, or boil some pitch in a belfry, and thereby if he happens to set the house of God in flames, and burn it to the ground, it is only another job to build it up again. Aristocracy and ornament must be attended to whatever the common and middling orders feel. And then the tax falls not where it ought to fall, on the higher, but on the middling orders of mankind. I suspect I have already trespassed on the time which ought to be allotted to this Lecture, and I must therefore adjourn the consideration of this subject; in the further investigation of which I shall enter pretty largely into the history of the national debt and taxes; and the application of that debt and taxes not to the aggrandizement of the people, but to that of a few Placemen and Pensioners.

ODE.

## O D E.

## THE UNIVERSAL DUTY.

FROM POEMS WRITTEN IN CLOSE CONFINEMENT IN THE  
TOWER AND NEWGATE.

[BY JOHN THELWALL.]

THERE are, degenerate!—to the future blind—  
Who deem the patriot fervor—the whole soul  
That spurns Oppression, and the controul  
Of Tyranny, should be to him resign'd,  
To whose lone bosom for protection clings  
No tender Bride—to whose embraces springs  
No smiling infant, to awake the mind  
To social tenderness.—Ah, fond mistake!  
Freedom, the just inheritance of all,  
Should be by all asserted; at the call  
Of this eternal principle should wake,  
As at th' Archangel's trump, the slumb'ring world;  
And to the glorious standard, wide unfurl'd,  
Of soul-enabling Truth impatient throng;  
While Civic-Virtue chaunts the martial song,  
And on their blood-stain'd Thrones fell Tyrants shake,

The enamour'd youth, stung with ingenuous shame,  
While at the Despot's nod his Country bows,  
Should blush to meet the Virgin's answering vows  
With unscar'd breast, or love's endearments claim,  
Till his indignant Virtue had been prov'd  
In some brave effort. For the wretch unmov'd  
By Patriot Virtue, tho' his outward frame  
Blooming as spring, and gay as youthful steers,  
Promise Love's joyous harvest, yet pursu'd  
By Slavery's abject terrors—aw'd—subdu'd—  
To Hymen's couch but half his manhood bears.  
Even hoary Age should fire the rising race  
With grave example: and the dire disgrace  
To spurn, one brave, expiring effort lend;  
Scorning beneath a servile yoke to bend  
That of all reverence robs his silver hairs!

But chief the patriot flame should rouse the Sire  
To deeds of manly Virtue, and inspire

The



The high disdain of Tyrannous controul,  
 Each Grace  
 New op'ning in the smiling face  
 Of a lov'd Infant, should awake his soul  
 To bolder energy:  
 For who that traces, with delighted eye,  
 In the Babes playful features the soft smile  
 Of a lov'd Consort, or the bolder traits  
 Of his own manly form, but heaves the sigh,  
 And feels the burning blush, to think, the while  
 Inglorious indolence consumes his days,  
 The chains are forging by encroaching Power  
 Shall cramp those darling limbs, and bend that neck  
 Round which his anxious arms so oft entwin'd!  
 Ah! who could bear—nor curse his natal hour—  
 To see his offspring to the general wreck  
 Of fell Oppression hopelessly resign'd?  
 Or who, with Nature's generous feeling blest,  
 While o'er his couch the iron sceptre waves,  
 Would strain a trembling Partner to his breast,  
 And stamp his image on a brood of slaves?  
*Tower, 13th July, 1794.*

## THE CRISIS.

" I will not, like a careless poet spoil  
 " The last act of my play, till now applauded,  
 " By giving the world just cause to say I fear'd  
 " Death more than the loss of honor."

BEAUMONT and FLETCHER,

IT comes—the awful hour!—Compatriots dear,  
 Who oft confiding in my honest zeal,  
 And keen attachment to the public weal,  
 Bent to my artless theme the partial ear;  
 Now search my breast with scrutiny severe;  
 That breast which frequent in the swelling pride  
 Of youthful ardor, the stern threats defied  
 Of distant danger: mark, if now base fear  
 Palsy its boasted virtue—or if now  
 (Forgetful of the truths so oft upheld)  
 Abject beneath the imperious feet I bow  
 Of terror-vested Power—suppliant!—depress'd!—  
 Or one emotion feel, but what the breast  
 Of Hampden or of Sidney might have swell'd,  
*Newgate, Nov. 26.*

THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XXXI.

Wednesday, 30th September, 1795.

*On the Causes of the CALAMITIES and DISTURBANCES that afflict the Nation. Lecture the Third, delivered on Wednesday Sept. 30, 1795. Containing, Animadversions on the OPPRESSION of the MIDDLE ORDERS; the Disproportionate Growth of the POORS' RATE; &c.*

CITIZENS,

ON the last evening that I met you in this place, a very considerable part of my time was taken up by quotations of facts from a work which still lies before me, and which exhibited, in detail, a picture of the abject situation of that class of the community, from whom we derive all our comforts, and all our advantages. I am well aware, Citizens, that by pursuing that plan, I did not best consult my individual popularity. I know very well, that details of facts will, in a considerable degree appear dull to a large audience, especially when those facts are quoted from printed authorities. But there are oppressions of so very extraordinary a nature, in this country of boasted liberty and happiness, that one can hardly venture to state them without producing, at the same time, evidence so decisive and impartial as may strike every auditor with the irresistible force of conviction.

I need not otherwise have referred to this work in particular for the facts which I detailed. I could have given you precisely the same details from Dyer's "Complaints of the Poor"—or, I could have substantiated, from my own observation and my own knowledge, the depressed and cruel state of the lower orders of the community. But Citizens, I did chuse to pursue this line of conduct; and for this reason:

Since I have stood forward as a public lecturer, a very considerable change has taken place in the audiences that have

No. XXXI.

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surrounded



surrounded me. When I first began, the persons who attended were of that truly respectable and valuable, though despised and oppressed classes of citizens abusively called *the lower orders*—persons who have themselves, also, engaged in political pursuits and who were members of the same popular societies with myself. To them I could speak of facts which their own enquiries and their own experience, had brought before them; and which had occasioned the political bias they entertained. To them therefore I could speak upon such topics in general terms, and with a boldness that required no support from printed documents, nor any other evidence than their notoriety and their own observation. But my audience is now, generally, of a different description: that is to say—it is not an audience of one particular class of men, or of men of one particular set of opinions. It is a mixed audience of all the different classes, descriptions and opinions which this great town affords.

This is the period to which I have looked forward with anxious hope and expectation: because I know that when general curiosity should thus be roused, then would be the time when I should, indeed, have an opportunity, if my industry and abilities were equal to the task, of diffusing the light of truth through a wider circle, and increasing the profelytes to the glorious cause of liberty and just equality. But citizens to effect this good purpose I know that, in a very considerable degree, I must alter my *manner of proceeding*:—not my *principles*!—those I believe are entwined with the very fibres of my existence; and they who wish to exterminate them from my bosom must do what my persecutors lately attempted—tear out my heart from its seat in this breast: for thus, and thus alone, can they exterminate an attachment which I should be base, vile, and degenerate (after the convictions that have sunk into my mind) if I could otherwise relinquish. But though the principle remained the same, the mode of proceeding became in some degree different. I must give to the prejudiced mind testimonies and authorities that will remove its prejudice; I must give to the wavering mind those strong and decided facts that will fix the yet fluctuating principles; and I must also endeavour to give these in such a manner as not to lose the

the interest inspired by boldness of sentiment—by striking the keys of passion, and interesting the imagination. I know, Citizens, that if I were disposed to make this merely a place of entertainment; personality and invective, party prejudice and factious declamation, would be the high road to fame and popularity.

To endeavour to pull down a *Pitt*, and set up a *Fox*, would be perhaps, in the present period; a very popular attempt: but it is not by pulling down one man and putting up another, that any good can be done in the present state of society; and I will do my persecutors the justice to say, that cruel and ferocious as they have become; from their situations, they are not worse than such situations must make any men in the world who attempt to retain them: and if Mr. *Fox*, or any individual whatever, with ten thousand times more virtue than any of the Whig party even possess, were to come into power, he must, under the present system, soon be as base and degenerate as as those now in power. You will have had a turbulent struggle for no other purpose than to change the name of your administration, without producing any alteration in favour of the great body of the people. So radically vicious are the principles upon which; under the detestable system of *Borough-mongering*; every administration is compelled to act. I must occasionally therefore, sacrifice the pursuit of grace and energy, and that degree of applause which I do not pretend to say is not pleasing to my mind, that I may make this place more a theatre of instruction than of mere amusement.

It is accordingly necessary for me to state facts in the most unquestionable shape, to draw my conclusions from those facts, and to leave both the one and the other to operate upon your minds. Your own particular judgments thus roused and awakened, enquiry will lead you to the standard of truth; and wherever that standard is displayed there I would wish you to repair; for there only can those principles be maintained which promote the happiness of man: and unless that happiness can be promoted, how absurd, how contemptible is it for any individual to sacrifice his individual peace, and that tranquillity which domestic obscurity can best afford, to mingle in the turbulent contentions of party or stem the torrent of oppression and corruption.



The facts stated on the former evening are sufficient to entitle me to draw this general conclusion—*That the condition of the labouring part of the community is not only excessively deplorable, but that it is worse in a most unpardonable degree than it was even a very few years ago.* If we were to go back a century or two, if there is honest blood enough in the hearts of Britons to feed a blush, our cheeks must be suffused with crimson, at the recital of the great and astonishing difference that has taken place in the midst of all our boasted improvements. Nor have we, I am afraid, citizens, much reason to suppose that their condition is likely to be soon ameliorated.—Abundant harvests have been reaped by the sickle of the British husbandman; we have had a great appearance of smiling prosperity; and felicity, one would have supposed, was returning in the train of plenty to this long-deserted island. Yet what is the real fact? Compare the real price of the necessary articles of life, with their price at the same season of the year, in any former period, and then tell me whether it is the gross monopolist, the borough-monger, and his agent, or the *masses of the people*, that are benefited by *that fertility which the masses of the people alone produce.*

No longer ago than this very day I have received a letter from a friend at Portsmouth, who among other particulars states, that a spirit of persecution is yet raging in that unhappy place called Gosport, where the magistrates, forsooth, are what they chuse to call exceedingly *loyal*: but what, if they were not magistrates, I should be inclined to consider as lawless. Assemblies of persons who, according to the cant phrase of aristocracy, are in respectable situations of life, have been disturbed, because when they met together over their cheerful bowl, they ventured to enquire into the causes of the miseries of the lower and middling orders of mankind; and yet to prove how very absurd and unnecessary such enquiries at such a time must be—to shew you the state of happiness and prosperity in the country, and to convince you at once that all the discontents in the nation are only created by a few factious *Jacobins*, who want to persuade a happy people that they are miserable: behold the letter is closed with a melancholy account that the bakers shops in Gosport are gone into mourning, and that the bakers left off baking bread.

But

But, miserable as is the condition of the people, we ought not to be astonished that they are reduced to such a situation. It may appear a strange assertion to some—but, for my part, I affirm, that it is so far from being astonishing that it is so bad, that it would be astonishing if their state was any better. For the principle of human action, generally speaking, is self-love; and, as it has been proved that the agents or members of government are not less fond of themselves than other persons, how can we expect, that when the great mass of the people have no voice or interest in the appointment of any branch of the government, that any branch of the government should feel itself bound, by any forcible tie whatever, to look after their welfare and happiness?

Those who make the laws, will certainly make them for the benefit of those who make law-makers. And, indeed, according to the general acceptance of mankind, they would act very immorally if they did not: for it is always supposed that, upon the principle of *gratitude*, if a man does that for you which you do not deserve, you should, in return, do that for him which he does not deserve either—or else you are proved to be guilty of injustice, in not having been as unjust as your interested benefactor.

Citizens, though at present it may appear to you, that what we call the lower orders of the people are alone particularly injured, by this method of having the laws exclusively made by Borough-mongers, over whom the great body of the people have no controul, yet let me advise you to reflect a little how far your own interests are also implicated.

I speak to you, as supposing that the majority here assembled are of the middle orders. I take it for granted, the greater part of those who hear me are either in decent and respectable trades, professional men, or persons of small independent fortunes. Taking this for granted, let me address you, and call to your recollection the errors of those judgments you have been too apt to form. Unfortunately, the distinctions which have been artfully created by those who wish to make a few the instruments of oppression against the whole, have narrowed the human heart, destroyed its sympathies, and occasioned us not to have that expansive affection for our fellow-beings to which they are entitled; else, I believe, we should find that, wherever we perceive the form of man, nay, further, wherever we perceive a capability of sensation



sation, there we are bound, by relative duties, to promote the feelings of happiness, and to remove every cause of pain, not necessary for the welfare and happiness of the whole. But the distinctions, the artful arbitrary divisions that have been made between one order of men and another, have occasioned us, generally speaking, to have but little sympathy for any but those of our own particular cast or description.

From the highest to the lowest, this foible prevails in the human character. Monarchs and courtiers have seldom any sympathy for the people; and the people, when they get the upper hand, I am sorry to say, have not much sympathy either for courtiers or monarchs. The titled proud regard the intermediate and lower classes of society with scorn, as though they were a set of beings unfit to be regarded in any respect as their equals; and the middling and lower orders but too frequently retaliate upon them, by making them the objects of bitter invective: and that which follows invective too frequently, in the human character, we cannot be at a loss to find out. This prejudice still extending, instead of considering the whole human race as one family, fritters, and divides, and subdivides again and again, into so many distinct interests, that one would think there were really as many classes and generations of men as butterflies; and that the business of the philosopher was to distinguish the one from the other, by the colour of his wings, or the length of his horns. The tradesman despises the mechanic; the mechanic the clown; and the clown, in return, despises both.—Fatal delusion!—So long as we thus go on, forgetting the real ties of affection, and creating artificial modes of personal distinction, so long, depend upon it, whatever principles we may profess, so long we shall continue to be a set of slaves; and not having the true social principle of liberty (the principle of universal fraternity) engrafted in our hearts, we may change our masters, indeed, but the change can never be for the better.

Let me, however, for argument's sake, take up this prejudice. Let me endeavour to make use of it, to convince your minds, even upon your own calculation, how absurdly you act, when you neglect to interest yourselves in the welfare and happiness of that class of mankind, whose laborious industry places them below you in the scale of comfort, though far—far above you in the scale of real utility.

Remember,

Remember Citizens, the interest of the middling and of the common people are closely and intimately incorporated: every act of oppression which has a tendency to sink the common people into still lower misery, has also a tendency to reduce those of the middling class to the very condition and situation from which those poor beings are so depressed. Accordingly we find, that in proportion to the oppression, miseries, calamities and extermination of the labouring poor, have been the bankruptcies, ruin, calamity, and misfortune of all the middling ranks of life. See how frequently the names of reputable tradesmen get inserted in the Gazette (the only sort of distinction indeed which in the present times, a man in the common ranks of life can expect!) Remember also the altered condition of the man of small fortune during the last 40 or 50 years. You will then perceive that though they have too frequently been made the instruments of depressing the lower orders, they are themselves equally depressed.

There was a time when an independence of four or five hundred a year was a very respectable independence for a man and his family, used to the enjoyments and elegancies which received their poignancy from a polished education. With this he might indulge himself in the best society; might keep his furnished apartments in the best part of the town; his country house, his horse, his whiskey, and his groom; without fear of embarrassment. What will it do now? Let every person who has either possessed, or moved in circles of those who do possess this income, put the question home, and recollect the difference; and he will find that upon such an income, the ancient, liberal character of a gentleman can no longer be maintained.

How has this arisen?—When we come to trace causes, we shall find that the same circumstances which have occasioned the peasant's wages to be inadequate to procuring for him that bread which is to sustain his life, has also brought the people of little fortune, into a condition in which the innocent luxuries and gaieties of life can be no longer indulged.

What then—will you be deluded by men who talk of protecting property but in reality destroy it?—What, protect



teet property by pillaging every labourer of two-thirds of his hire, and every man of property of two-thirds of his fortune?

I know a gentleman at this time, living on his own freehold house, who has again and again assured me that he pays more taxes for that freehold house than five and thirty years ago would have paid the rent if he had hired it. Is this protecting property? Be not mistaken: there is but one species of property that Borough-mongers wish to support; and that is the property of Rotten Boroughs; a property which gives them the power of disposing of your lives, your intellects, your freedom, and the happiness of your posterity through all future ages.

There are other circumstances also, which make this depression and misery of the laborious poor press particularly hard upon the middling classes, and occasion them to be brought into so reduced a situation as we perceive them at this time. Let us remember the present mode of relieving the distresses and necessities of the labouring poor, and we shall soon be able to decide, according to the vulgar proverb, who pays the piper. The mode of relief—for some kind of relief must be granted when a man's whole wages will hardly produce half the bread alone, necessary for himself and family; for we have not yet quite attained that savage ferocity that we can see our peasants and manufacturers absolutely starving, by wholesale; though, from supineness and inattention, and many of us, perhaps, from ignorance of the real situation of those people, so hardened our hearts as to be contented to consign them to the scanty prison allowance of bread and water! Well then some relief might be procured; and the general mode of relief is by a poor rate. I shall shew you by and by what sort of a burthen this is upon the middling classes of society, who are to bear the burthen of it.

But let us, by way of digression, say a few words upon the relief itself. The poor man being no longer able to get subsistence for himself, is condemned perhaps to a work-house. I shall say nothing of the immorality which frequently must be engendered by shutting up together such a number of poor beings to brood over their discontents, and impart their irritated feelings to each other. I wish

to dwell rather upon the simple justice or injustice of the practice—and to put the question home to your own feelings, Why ought any man to be immured between high walls, resembling those of a prison, merely because he is found guilty of poverty—the consequence of being doomed to inordinate toil without an adequate reward? Would it not be more *just*, and more *wise* to put the great mass of the people upon such a footing as to enable them to maintain themselves and families by their own labour, that their hearts might not be depressed by unjust confinement, nor themselves bowed down to a spirit of abject submission to those from whom they receive in *charity*, what they ought to receive as a right—because their labour must have earned it, before those who give could have imparted it to them.

It is observed by persons who live in the neighbourhood of *Greenwich Hospital* (and as far as I have seen, the observation is well founded) that you hardly ever see a pensioner with a contented countenance. This has been considered by some as a mark of the baseness and *ingratitude* of the human character: but to me it is a mark of the dignity, independence and energy of human intellect. There is implanted in every breast an instinctive love of freedom: a *loco-motive*, as well as an intellectual dependence—a desire to rove at will, wherever our inclinations may lead, with no other restraint than the necessities of which each one (under the restraints of just and necessary laws) is to judge for himself. But this cannot be the case of the poor individual relieved, according to present institutions, by what is called charity: he becomes a poor stationary animal—a mere vegetable-like substance—“a coarse and homely dunghill-hill weed, “fixed to one spot to rot just where he grows!”

But it is more to my immediate point, to dwell upon the circumstances of the pressure of the poor's rate and the manner in which it falls upon particular classes. And here Citizens, let it be remembered, that, in the first place, this relief is inadequate to comfortable subsistence; independent of this circumstance of confinement, which in the case of workhouse charity is much more rigid and intolerable than that which I have instanced. Let it be remembered also, that it is liable to a great variety of



abuses some of which I slightly detailed on the last evening, and which are more amply detailed in the 25th page of this work as follows:

The poor-rate is now in part a *substitute for wages*. And a miserable substitute it is, for the following reason:—  
 1st. Because the distribution of it being very much in the discretion of the overseers of the poor, who, in saving the parish money, save their own, and who in distributing it do not always regard strict justice, many modest and deserving families, that cannot live entirely without relief, receive not sufficient relief from it, chusing rather to suffer oppression than to incur the ill-will of their superiors by applying to a magistrate for redress. 2dly. Because the receiving of that from the parish in the precarious way of alms, which they ought to receive in wages as the reasonable recompence of labour, is a great discouragement to the industrious poor, tends to sink their minds in despondency, and to drive them into desperate courses.—  
 3dly. Because sometimes the men, either from resentment at the hard usage they have met with, are provoked to desert their families; or else too often, from mere despair of being able to maintain them honestly, they and their wives betake themselves to wicked courses: the example corrupts their children, whose minds being thus tainted remain ever after dead to all virtuous impressions. 4thly. Because wherever large sums of money are raised for the poor, a great temptation is laid in the way of unprincipled overseers, who, by embezzling a part of what comes into their hands, rob the poor in the first instance; and afterwards to cover their villainy, perjure themselves in swearing to their accounts.

But there are some other abuses which deserve some little reflection, because they are of great importance to substantiate the inseparable connection between the interests of the middle classes of society, and those of the laborious poor.

You are to remember, that when the labourer, either within or without the doors of any of these charitable seminaries, receives any other support than that which is procured as wages from his employer, he does in reality receive that support, not from the individual who employed him, and has reaped the immediate profits of his labour; but from those by whom he never was employed, and who are only advantaged in a secondary way by his labor. Neither is it paid by the higher orders of society. It is paid

paid by assessments levied, almost exclusively, upon the middle orders: and therefore no persons in the world have so great an interest in taking care that the laborious poor shall be amply recompensed for their labour, as the middle orders: they who pay the deficiency surely must feel it to be their interest that no deficiency should be felt.

But it may be supposed I am departing a little from the truth, because the general outcry is, that it is the rich who support the poor; that the alms of the great are the sources from which (kind commiserating beings as we always find them!) all the bounty and alleviation spring. But it is not true.—It is true, indeed, that the rich, the powerful, the great and the proud are supported by the toil, the industry, the alms of the laborious poor: but it is not true that even those reliefs which, in hours of crying necessity and distress, are extorted from the hard hearts of unfeeling superiors, come in any considerable degree from the purses of overgrown monopolists.

How should it be so? Let it be remembered that these classes are very fond of keeping themselves distinct. The rich do not like to see the beggarly miserable cabins of the poor around them; they wish to herd together: as birds of a feather—you know the adage. They wish to keep themselves among persons of their own particular ranks, that their *fine feelings* may not be wounded by the sight of misery and wretchedness, which they are not at all times inclined to relieve.

This, Citizens, is in some degree the case throughout the country, but more particularly so in London and other great cities. I shall appeal to a few facts, that will convince you that I am stating this subject fairly, candidly, and impartially. I will refer you to a parish in which I have myself lived, the parish of *St. Thomas's Southwark*. In that parish there are scarcely any persons of considerable property. Almost all the houses are small, and inhabited by persons who live with difficulty upon the profits of their labour; so that one half of the parish has the burden (as it is called, and a heavy burden upon such people it is) of supporting the other half. Hence the poor rate is never less than four, and is sometimes eight shillings in the pound; while in *St. George's, Hanover-square*, where your great dukes, lords, and potentates reside, there is sometimes not a single pauper; and they are obliged to *hire a man to take charity*, that they may not be com-



pelled to take a share of the poor's rate of the adjoining parish.

Citizens, wherever this burden rests, we shall find that it is increasing in a most alarming degree. I shall be obliged to recur for a little while to the dry statement of figures and calculations to make this appear to its proper extent: but I shall endeavour to enliven them as much as the subject will permit.

Give me leave then to tell you that the facts come from the book which I have quoted so often before: "The Case of Labourers in Husbandry".

You will find these facts in the 44th page of that work. For the reasonings upon them which I interspersed, I am myself accountable: let them be tried by the touchstone of strict examination. Having premised this, I shall proceed to state to you the growth of the poor's rate from 1572 to the present time.

Citizens, the supposed amount in 1572—for in this first period I am to inform you that the calculations cannot be stated with the same precision as the latter instances. This however makes no difference as to the general argument as you will presently see—The supposed amount then in 1572, was 200,000*l.* per year. Mark then the growth of this burthen during the first 113 years. It will be eminently instructive, as you will discover, when you come to compare it with the growth of other periods. In 1685, which was at the close of the reign of Charles II. we are informed by Dr. Davenant, a very respectable and well-informed writer of those times, that the poor rate then amounted to £.665362 per year. Thus in 113 years the increase of this annual burthen had swoln no more than about £.465,000. In 68 years afterwards, that is to say in the year 1753, seven years before the close of George II's. reign (according to Henry Fielding, who was also a respectable and accurate writer) we are informed that it had increased to one million per year:—That is to say, it was £.335,000 per annum more in 1753 than in 1685. Now please to observe, for it is very well worth your attention, the proportion of this increase (that is the increase of year upon year, during the 68 years I mentioned last) and you will find that it was much the same, as during the 113 years I mentioned before: that is to say, the annual increase during the whole of the first period was £.4,118; and the annual increase, in the latter period, was £.4,921; so that the

the annual increase was not very considerably more in the one period than the other; and even the difference that did exist may easily be accounted for by the increased circulation, and consequently the decreased value of money.

But now citizens we are come to speak of facts of a very different description, we come now, the Poet Laureat Pye would tell you, to the glorious, the happy the flourishing reign of George III. But I am no Poet Laureat, Citizens. I did once court the muse a little; though I never mused much for the court.

“ But not in fancy’s path I wander’d long,

“ But stoop’d to truth, and moraliz’d my song.”

I shall therefore speak a plain but melancholy truth and say that we are now come to the calamitous, and disastrous of George III. (*A hiss solitary, and consequent indignation in the audience*)

Be quiet, Citizens, do not suffer yourselves to be thrown into confusion, you know when the heel of truth presses hard upon the neck of the expiring serpent of error and delusion, we must expect that he will hiss a little. The hirelings and dependants of that system of corruption which has produced these disasters, cannot be expected to bear the truths that may lead to an investigation of the delinquency of their employers without emotion: and really, Citizens, I have reason to be very much obliged to persons for interrupting me a little now and then; because a man standing in this situation, having nothing to work upon but his own ideas, is apt to grow a little dull and torpid or so; and a little stimulus—a little of the venom of falsehood spit in his face now and then, does him a great deal of good; and to tell you the truth, I believe the Minister is so much my friend, that he is kind enough to keep persons constantly in pay, to take care that I shall not want so excellent a provocative.

I shall now proceed to shew you why I consider it as a disastrous reign. I don’t consider it as disastrous because we have lost the *Thirteen Colonies* of America: we have gained the kingdom of Corsica as an exchange! and that I have no doubt will make us a very ample compensation; and especially as it realizes one of the titles of our august sovereign, at a time when he is much in danger of losing another.

George



George III. by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland king, Defender of the Faith, and so forth. Such is the present stile and title. Now, perhaps, it may happen, that when we come to make peace (as by and by we must whether we will or no, because we shall not have the means of carrying on the war) why then citizens we may perhaps lose this titular gem of the British Crown—*King of France*. But though this, hitherto a mere empty name, may chance to be annihilated, remember that ample compensation is made by that which has been hitherto a mere mockery, *Defender of the Catholic Faith*, being converted into a reality; his Majesty being, by the new constitution of his new kingdom, bound to defend the Catholic faith, in Corsica; an acquisition which he has so cheaply procured! and which, no doubt, he will as cheaply maintain!

Citizens—The reasons why I call it a disastrous reign I shall explain—and remember it is no reproach to the King, that it is disastrous. Misfortune is not a crime in those that suffer, but in those whose ill conduct occasion it. Where then is the disloyalty of calling the reign disastrous, if it be proved—and who will deny that it can be proved, that the King had no hand in making it disastrous; that his only misfortune is, that he has always happened to chuse a set of men for his ministers with the same bad principles—and eager to propose and support the same bad measures. What can he do which he has not done? He has tried change—He has tried constancy—He had three sets of ministers in a few months—He had one set of ministers for thirteen years; and if neither change nor constancy would do, how can we be considered as censuring him when we lament the fatality! The plain truth is, there is “something rotten in the state of Denmark,”—to wit, the rotten boroughs. In the disastrous reign then, of George III. that is to say, in twenty-three years, from 1753 to 1776, sixteen years of which were in the present reign, we find, from the *published accounts of overseers*, that the medium of the poors’ rates had amounted, *per annum*, to £.1,529,780—that is to say, during these twenty-three years there is an increase of £.529,780: which is more than the whole increase during an interval of 123 years, from 1572 to 1695.

This you may consider as melancholy and alarming enough; but I am compelled to go on to a statement still more melancholy and alarming.

Some

Some Citizens may think that these statements press hard upon the conductors of measures during these latter intervals—but I answer in the words of the poet:

“ I must be cruel only to be kind :

“ Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind.”

This worse then I will state to you with my usual democratic plainness; and you will find that in nine years (the intervening period between 1776 and 1785) the medium produced upon casting up the levies of three successive years, is £.2,004,238 *per annum* poors' rates only. Now, then, Citizens, what is the conclusion we draw from this? Why that, in nine years only, there is a greater increase of burden, in this individual respect, at least, than there was in 113 years ending in 1685; so much for that part of the statement.

There is another point of view in which I must place this circumstance, which will more immediately convince you that this could only result from flagrant errors in the maxims and principles of government, or the misconduct of those administrations who have governed us during that period; and not from any proportionate decrease in the value of money, or increase in the real wealth and opulence of the country. We find then, Citizens, that from 1572 to 1685, the annual increase of the Poor's Rate (that is, the growing increase of year above year) was £4,118,000; that in the interim between 1685 and 1753, the annual increase was only £4,921,000:—that is to say, for nearly two hundred years the annual increase was nearly equal; and if we consider the progressive improvements and alterations in the state of society, we shall find that this increase was little more than proportioned to the increase of the *quantity*, and consequent decrease of the *value* of money: in other words, that the increase was rather nominal than real.—But, when we come to compare the facts during the next period, we find that, between 1753 and 1776, the increase is not £4000 per year, but £23,000; and that, from 1776 to 1785, the annual increase is not 23,000, but £52,719: that is to say, every succeeding year you have paid, for Poor Rate only, £52,719 more than you paid the year before.—As for what has taken place since 1785, I have no authentic documents that enable me to state. But if you consider the facts stated to you, from this tribune, in the former Lecture,—if you call to mind that, out of 40,000 inhabitants of *Norwich*, 25,000 were reduced to the necessity of taking relief from public charity; that



that in *Marybone* parish only, 750 families, during last *January*, claimed relief from the parish, who had never received charity before: if you add to these facts, the enormous increase of your public burdens—if it is true, as in this book (*Ca. Lab. Husb.*) is stated upon apparently good authorities, that for every additional hundred million added to the national debt, there has always been an addition of half a million annually to the rates levied for the support of the poor, we shall find we cannot possibly calculate the present Poor's Rate at less than two million and a half; and that the probability is, that it is not much, if at all, under three millions,—paid out of the pockets of that class of mankind, who, living in the vicinity of poverty, are obliged to bear the burdens which poverty brings upon the parish.

Citizens, I have endeavoured here, in a chart which some of you may, perhaps, be curious enough to view, after the Lecture is over, to describe the increasing proportion of this public burden. You will find this drawing regularly divided in upright spaces, equal to the number of years described, by each division. You will there find that the burthen increased only gradually at first, but that it has since been spreading and spreading every year more rapidly than the former, till at this time it is spread to so immeasurable an extent, that it is frightful even to contemplate the growing load; especially when we consider how greatly it is increased by the voluntary contributions, which every man who has a heart must every now and then be putting his hand into his pocket to pay towards objects of distress. You will find, too, that I have described, by three pillars, three classes of society upon which it has been said the support of the nation equally depends.

I have represented, by the first pillar, the common people depressed and broken down; affording no longer, therefore, their proper strength and power to the government: for if you wish the common people to bear you up—if you would have your national dignity supported—if you would have your independence provided for, you must take care that that great and valuable column, the common mass of mankind, is not broken and cast down: for they, and they alone, can be the bulwark of your strength and defence; from them it is you receive your bread, and from them also you must receive your protection, if ever you should be obliged to struggle, at your own doors, against those depredations and mischiefs which you have endeavoured to carry to the doors of freemen in a neigh-

neighbouring country, that dared to discover, that, without freedom, there can be neither manhood nor rationality.

By the second pillar, I have described the middling orders of society, and endeavoured to shew you, that upon them it is that the whole weight of this particular burthen principally rests.

The third column will speak for itself. You will see that it is crowned with the Corinthian capital of polished society; and you will see, that it is towering aloft in proportion as the others are depressed; and that it only just touches, at one corner, the cumberous weight of burthens with which the others are pressed down. This will, I believe, give you a picture, pretty accurate, of the increasing mischiefs of misgovernment to the people; and it is so supported by facts, so strengthened by reason and argument, that no sophistry will be able to overthrow it: and though these lips should be sealed by the hand of persecuting Despotism, even this little paltry draught shall speak conviction; yea, these silent walls shall be eloquent of your wrongs, and rouse the recollection in your minds, that there are beings in this country, full of power, full of grandeur, fortified by every connexion, greatness and affluence—commanding, at once, the sword and the purse of the nation, who tremble at the breath of popular enquiry, and cannot be content without the blood or destruction of all those who dare to utter bold and honest truths.

If, Citizens, those things that I have stated to you be facts—if my reasonings and conclusions upon those facts can be supported, have I not a right to call this a calamitous and disastrous reign? Remember, I wish not to throw any odium upon an eminent individual—I wish not to direct your anger against individuals—I would stir you up to correct bad systems. Oh! that we could in all instances (even in those of ministerial corruption and oppression) redress the wrong, without inflicting sufferings upon him who does it. Oh! that we could, at all times, make Benevolence the hand-maid of Liberty, and free ourselves from our chains, without being exposed to the cruel and dire necessity of breaking them upon the heads of our oppressors!

If, then, I struggle to exterminate from my breast (and I call the great deity Conscience to bear me witness that such is my wish) all malignity and revenge against the present administration, do not suppose I mean to stir up ungentle thoughts against an individual, who is as much wronged as yourselves;



and who is obliged to bear the reproach, in a considerable degree, which is due, not to him, but to that system of corruption so deeply implanted upon what once was the free constitution of Britain, that unless the enlightened efforts of the people (boldly but peaceably united together) exterminate it in time, all is lost, and ruin and desolation swallow us up for ever.

I wish to state facts; draw your own conclusions. I think however you must agree with me that this is a calamitous and disastrous reign: and one of the greatest calamities is, as I have already stated, that in all the changes of administrations which have taken place during that reign, we find them all adopting the same principles. And surely, while I throw no reproach upon a powerful individual it is no High Treason to lament his misfortunes.

However at any rate, we must admit that this state of the country is equally calamitous both to the august personage, and to the people: to him the calamity is the loss of that good name which would attach itself, in history, to the record of a reign in which the people had been happy and prosperous, the loss, to a very considerable degree, of the affections of the people; the loss of dominion and population.—But what is the calamity to the people? to them the misfortune is to see misery staring them in the face; to see their children, their parents, their relatives, butchered by the hand of war; to see war treading upon the heels of war; famine stalking in the train; and to hear nothing but cries of anguish and lamentation resounding in their ears.

Such is the disastrous situation to which the great body of the people are reduced. The voice of nature they must repress; woe they cannot; the door of social happiness is closed against them; it is not possible for many to taste those best endearments of the social heart; because a numerous issue is here, of all the disasters that can await upon man, the most calamitous: for who can bear to see his offspring submit to that abject misery which is now their lot? What rational being can reflect without horror, that whatever be his toil, whatever be his exertions, it is impossible for him to support with comfort the infants to whom he has given birth; much less is it in his power to impart to them any of that information by which the mind is softened and enlightened. Instead of this, the gathering gloom of ignorance, is to be spreading thicker and thicker throughout the country, and the

the great mass of the people are to be doomed to no other hope or expectation, but to be brought up in a state of privation of intellectual improvement, sinking them almost to the condition of the brute creation; to drudge from morn to night, and almost from night to morn again, is here the only privilege of humanity: and all this for what? To increase the grandeur and independence of the country? No—for shame, disgrace, defeat—so that the disasters and the disgraces go hand in hand; and it is difficult to say whether our present misfortunes are greater than our disasters, or our disasters greater than our misfortunes.

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EXTRACTS *from* BLACKSTONE'S COMMENTARIES,  
*shewing the* NECESSITY *of a* PARLIAMENTARY  
REFORM.

BOOK I. CHAP. II.

IN a *free state, every man*, who is supposed a free agent, ought to be in some measure his own governor; and therefore a branch at least of the legislative power should reside in the **WHOLE BODY OF THE PEOPLE.**

*Same Book and Chapter.*

It is a matter most essential to the liberties of this kingdom, that such members be delegated to this important trust, as are most eminent for their probity, their fortitude, and their knowledge; for it is a known apothegm, of the great Lord Treasurer Burleigh, "That England could never be ruined but by a Parliament:" and as Sir Matthew Hale observes, this being the highest and greatest court over which none other can have jurisdiction in the kingdom; if by any means a mismanagement should any way fall upon it, the subjects of this kingdom are left without all manner of remedy.

To



To the same purpose the President Montesquieu presages, that as Rome, Sparta and Carthage have lost their liberties, and perished, so the *Constitution of England* will in time lose its liberty, will perish: it will perish, "*Whenever the Legislative power shall become more corrupt than the executive.*"

Whenever this time should arrive Mr. Locke tells us, (on Gov. p. 2. Sec. 140. 227.)—"There remains still inherent in the people a supreme power to remove the legislative, when they find the legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them: for, when such trust is abused, it is thereby forfeited, and devolves to those who gave it."

*Same Book and Chapter.*

Mr. Blackstone, who certainly was a Tory writer, as well as being Crown lawyer, and solicitor-general to the Queen, informs us, after describing the British Constitution—"Not that I assert it in fact quite so perfect as I have here endeavoured to describe it; for, if any alteration might be wished or suggested in the present frame of Parliaments, it should be in favour of a more complete representation of the people."

## THE TRIBUNE. N<sup>o</sup>. XXXII.

Friday, 2d October, 1795.

*On the Causes of the INCREASING CALAMITIES, of the NATION. Part the Fourth—Including an Examination of the Arguments against increasing the Wages of the INDUSTRIOUS POOR—and Strictures on the increasing Luxury and Ostentation of PLACEMEN, COURTIERS, and their DEPENDENTS.*

CITIZENS,

TOWARDS the latter end of the last Lecture I had occasion to apply a very marked epithet to the character of the present period. I had occasion to speak of it as a disastrous reign: an expression which gave so much offence to one or two individuals that they could not help expressing it in an unmanly manner. But this is not all, two or three persons immediately, without staying for any explanation, departed from the room.

If those citizens are again present I pity their feelings very much: for I find myself compelled, upon a more close and particular review, to begin this Lecture with the same sort of language. I shall proceed immediately to show you why we ought to consider it as disastrous. You will perceive, however, in the course of that examination, that no blame is imputable to a Royal Personage on that account; for we cannot surely accuse any person of being criminal in proportion as he is unfortunate: nor could even the metaphors of Burke, or the metaphysics of Wyndham prove that a man's misfortunes must inevitably be his guilt.

No. XXXII.

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For



For my own part, I shall freely and fairly declare, that so far from meaning any thing personal in this reflection, I never wish, so long as I live, to see a better king upon the throne of Great Britain; and I mean to say more, that, if we indulge our reflections upon the circumstances that have recently passed before our view, we shall find that we have very little reason to expect a better.

It is impossible also that I can mean any censure to the Royal personage, because it is well known in this country, "A King can do no wrong." Whatever errors therefore I have to detail, you are to remember I am speaking of the crimes and vices of the several administrations, which have unfortunately existed in this country during this reign, and not of the person by whose *name* that reign is distinguished. To them the *guilt* attaches; but the misfortune attaches both to the king and the people. Nay, Citizens, I think there is sufficient evidence to prove, that this great, august and sacred personage does himself consider that these disasters really do exist; nay that the administration of the country are convinced that there are such disasters: that unlike the sometime sovereign of another country, he is so little disposed to sleep over these disasters, that even *royal philosophy* is not sufficient to fortify his mind against the prospect of thickening calamities; and therefore it is, that the caterers of his pleasures have been ordered to hurry him to *Dutch fairs* at *Frogmore*, and to send expresses to *Sadler's Wells*, to fetch the most expert tumblers to *Weymouth*, to recreate the royal mind, and dissipate uneasy reflection.

Having thus explained myself to mean no reproach to the *best of kings*, but to apply simply all blame and censure to his administrations; and particularly to the present most usurping ministers. Having said thus much, permit me to ask you, have there or have there not been many disasters during the present reign? Was it no disaster to this country that we should be torn to pieces by those extravagant factions that existed under the *open* and under the *secret* administration of Lord Bute? Were the tumults that took place in an early period in St. George's Fields, and the record of which is still written in blood upon young Allen's tomb, no disasters? Was his fall

no

no disaster to his friends in particular? and from the circumstances that followed, and the pensions that a bad administration caused to be bestowed, was it no disaster to the country? Were the tumults in the year 1780 no disasters? Were the innumerable executions that followed those tumults, no disasters either? when not content that the cruel disasters of the times should compel a malignant execution in the streets of London, and that four or five hundred should have fallen by the bayonets of the soldiers, it was thought necessary that under the auspices of an individual, who now bears the highest office of the law, more should be tried, cast, and condemned by twenties and thirties in a lot.

Are the disturbances of recent date no calamities? Is it no disaster that in this country it has been *found* or *thought* necessary, by a wise and virtuous administration, led by a heaven-born minister, that prosecution and persecution should rage from one extremity of the country to the other, and that *England, Scotland and Ireland*, should be frightened and scarified with rumours of false plots and fabricated charges of high treason, till at length, in the last of these countries, the irritated mind has been driven to something which *looks* like treason indeed—and that in a very formidable shape?—Such are the melancholy but inevitable consequences of persecution for opinion! *men who find it no longer safe to think, rush into that violence for which thought is not necessary!* thought and discussion are necessary for political reform.—Violence and confusion can be produced without any discussion whatever!

Citizens, is the war that still rages throughout Europe, and in which this country has so considerable a share no disaster? Was the American war which lasted seven years, is supposed to have cost 200,000 lives, and almost 140,000,000l. of English money—was this no calamity? Is the present war no disaster, whose strides towards national ruin and general desolation have been so gigantic as to mock to scorn the pigmy efforts of former carnage, and to bring us at once, as it were, to the acmé of profligacy, desolation and frenzy?—When we consider that almost the whole continent of Europe has been made a scene of slaughter and desolation!—that the friends of freedom have fallen by the hands of those who should be free!—



champions by the hands of Britons!—is there no calamity think you in this unnatural struggle?

The number of lives lost to this country by this war I have not sufficient documents to state; and I shall not attempt to amuse you with rude conjecture. But of that which according to ministerial calculation, is more estimable than human life (I mean property) we have the documents that will enable us to prove that in two years 70,000,000*l.* of British gold have been wasted and dissipated: (seventy millions reduced to three per cent.) have been added to that national debt, of which not only ourselves, but our posterity, to the end of time, according to the present system, must bear the burden. Villanous injustice! base robbery upon posterity! their consent certainly never could be taken, either by themselves or representatives, real or pretended, for accumulating that burden. What right then have we to lay that burden upon their shoulders?

Is emigration no calamity? Is it no calamity that, in one year 80,000 Britons should have emigrated from this country? I include *Ireland* in this general description and calculation—for I am not very fond of those distinctions of *Englishmen*, *Scotchmen* and *Irishmen*, upon which national vanity sometimes piques itself. I revere the unity and brotherhood of the three; and embrace them all as equal parts of one great family. Is it no calamity, that, in spite of the heavy burdens of poors' rates accumulated upon the shoulders of the middling orders, the great mass of the people should be reduced to such misery that the wages of their industry will not provide them and their families with bread?

If these are disasters—if these are calamities, surely we have a right to lament the calamity: taking care, at the same time, to fix the criminality upon the right shoulders. I think I shall be enabled, in the progress of this discussion, to show that those are the shoulders of the Borough-mongers: beings who *without any constitutional right or authority*, take upon themselves to dispose of the voices, liberties, and lives of their fellow citizens; and then have the audacity to call their arbitrary appointments presentations.

But,

BUT, CITIZENS, let me proceed step by step in this enquiry: for I have endeavoured to give a regular and consistent form to this course of lectures, that when they come to be printed they may form one connected series and system. This I have done at the expence I assure you of very considerable labour—labour under which my health has been in danger of sinking—but I have this honest conviction that I cannot expend my life better than in the service of my country; and I believe I act the more manly part, when I prefer losing that life in the field of reason, to that of slaughter.

Let me proceed then regularly from the steps which I have taken in the former lecture; and go on to consider what are the pleas that are made use of, what the pretences brought forward to show that the condition of the laborious orders of society ought not to be improved. It has been said, that though the condition of the laboring part of mankind is in reality calamitous to a considerable degree, though they are in reality as badly off as I have represented them (for my facts came from such authorities that it is impossible to deny them—authorities perfectly impartial—that seem to have no inclination whatever in favour of such Jacobinical traitors, as dare to think of parliamentary reform—authorities which speak simply of facts and leave it to every honest man to draw his own conclusions!)—It has been said, then, by those who find themselves compelled to admit that the industrious poor are not in reality properly rewarded for their toil, that this is a calamity which no government can possibly remedy—because, say they, it will be ruinous to our trade and commerce to increase the wages of labourers and manufacturers.

What, Citizens, ruinous to our trade and commerce to suffer the real tradesmen, the men who create that commerce, to get a decent and comfortable livelihood by their industry! what, ruinous to our trade and commerce to do justice to those but for whose toil and exertions we could have neither trade, commerce nor any other blessing or advantage whatever! I for my own part am not very much inclined to build my conclusions upon expedients. I wish always to build upon principles: and principle tells me that *the labourer* in whatever department of life, *is worthy of his hire*; and that he cannot be said to receive his hire unless



unless by his industry he is enabled to procure a comfortable subsistence for himself and family.

Let us talk no more of charity—let us talk no more of benevolence in these cases—but of the great eternal principles of justice! and laying our hands upon our hearts let us put to ourselves this question, “By what right, by what authority do I wallow in luxury, while those who have produced that luxury are writhing in the gripe of famine, or at best pining in hopeless penury?”

But it happens, in this case, as in most, that take which course they will—contend for principle or contend for expediency, the enemies to the rights and liberties of mankind must be baffled. It is perfectly indifferent what the sort of foundation is upon which they build their arguments against ameliorating the condition of the great mass of mankind. I think I can defeat every art of sophistry they can use even upon their own favourite foundation of expediency; and prove that the arguments they take shelter under, cannot be supported.

You say that if you ameliorate the condition of the great body of the people—if you make their wages proportionate now to what they were in early periods, comparatively with the price of the necessaries of life, your flourishing commerce must perish: and it is supposed, forsooth, that though our *commerce* is to perish that our *constitution* may live, or what our metaphysical haranguers in the House of Commons mean by constitution—that is the sacred immunities of rotten boroughs—yet we are not to say, perish our commerce rather than our people should be reduced to starving misery. But upon what pretence do you affirm that you cannot do justice to the common people without destroying your commerce? Look at your great commercial men—your opulent manufacturers—your merchants who can afford to banquet prime ministers, even in this age of luxury and dissipation, when a prime minister must put into his mouth, every time it opens, that which in point of expence would satisfy a poor family for a year! Are their splendid palaces, a proof of this? those pompous edifices which, instead of being the counting-houses of tradesmen, a stranger to our manners and polity would suppose were temples of Pagan deities: and temples of Pagan deities indeed they are—or rather of one deity—  
of

of Plutus, god of pelf—upon whose shrine the happiness—the very existence of thousands is imolated by the unfeeling and rapacious priests who officiate at those altars. Is this increasing grandeur—this growing magnificence a proof that the profits of our commerce will not afford proportionate wages to the authors and creators of that commerce? Look, if you please, a little further. Behold the splendid equipages, and pompous insolence of those who fatten upon the wages of corruption, and whose only profits are derived from over-taxing a hardly-treated people—whose grandeur, whose titles, and the *hereditary honours* of whose children are the proud rewards of doing the dirty work of a minister. Let us consider also the great increase of taxes with which it is found necessary for those good, glorious, wise, and excellent purposes, that the trade, commerce and agriculture of the nation should be saddled.

Perhaps it will shock your prejudices to hear it; yet remember, that those very men whom you scorn, and whom you pretend you cannot afford to pay in a better manner for their labour, do, in reality, produce and pay the whole of the taxes thus lavished, for those worthy purposes. They produce the whole of that which produces the money with which those taxes are paid. Theirs is the creating toil which produces the resources of agriculture, the materials of traffic, and the basis of commerce.

See then the inordinate increase of taxation which the product of their labour is capable of bearing. In little more than a century, our taxes have arisen from two millions, according to some calculations, to between 20 and 30 millions per year. Yet we are told that no part of these taxes can be spared. Why can they not be spared? because there are so many places, pensions, emoluments—so many commissaries and contractors to be taken care of, that government pays for every thing through the nose: therefore, it is impossible to decrease this load of taxation, whatever may be the misery of the people who bear it.

But let us consider whether a part of this taxation ought not to come, particularly in those melancholy times, from the pockets of those who have profited by former



former abuses. No, say the ministry—no say the opposition—for in this theme they will join together in harmonious duetto, and support a common cause by common exertions. No, you must not touch those sacred things called places and pensions. They are not liable to taxation. “It must be a mere joke,” says *Pitt*. “The gentlemen must mean to laugh with us a little—A droll conceit, indeed, that we should be such idiots as to tax our own places and pensions. O yes,” says *Fox*, “it can only be a joke: patent places are as sacred as any man’s estate. You must never think of taxing them.”

Ah! say ye so? Whigs and Tories say ye so? And would none of those landed gentlemen who are so fond of associating to protect their property, get up and answer this strange assertion? “Is it so indeed? Are patent places as sacred and inviolable as our estates? Then *what security have we for those estates?* Are not our estates taxed for the creation and maintenance of these sinecures? Are not all places and pensions paid by taxation? If then sinecures and pensions, thus created from public plunder, are sacred, and must not be touched even with the little finger of taxation, and a venal Cabinet, supported by a corrupt Parliament, can create what sinecures and pensions they think fit, what security have we that our whole estates may not, in process of time, be converted into pensions and sinecures? Why may not the Crown, by means of taxation, become sole proprietor, and no individual property remain but places and pensions?”

But the cause of complaint stops not here. The revenues of the rich may be increased by their own authority, but the revenues of labouring men must not. The revenues of Princes may be augmented, but the pay of peasants and manufacturers must not. You are told by the wise, virtuous opposition in the House of Lords, that the necessaries and luxuries of life have so increased in their price, that you ought to give 25,000 a year more to the present Prince of Wales, with no family, than you did to the late Prince of Wales with a numerous family. Is this a proof, that if you increased the pay of the common people, your trade and commerce would be ruined? Is it another proof of this that we can afford, out of the earnings of industry, to subsidize all the despots of Europe? Nay to send Ambassadors, with tears in their eyes, to Emperors suspected of being a little sick of the war, to pray them to keep on the war at the expence of John Bull?

Bell? who though he cannot afford to keep his own peasantry from starving, can afford to keep up the pomp of the regular and orderly government of Austria, for which all Englishmen must entertain so sacred a veneration!!!

Can we afford also to support all the aristocrats, rebels, Chouans, and the banditti of Brittany, who chose to uphold their voices and their arms against the general sentiment of their country? Can we afford all this? Can we afford in Ireland and on our coasts to maintain magazines of live stock (all our salted provisions being already exhausted) to supply the midnight murderers of Brittany, because they choose to honour the cause of Gallic Royalty by their support? and at the same time pretend that we cannot afford to save those from starving who are the very prop of our existence? Can we also, while so exceedingly poor, afford to send splendid embassies to China, that some great and mighty lord may be decorated with new distinctions for having seen his sublime highness the Emperor take his whiff of tobacco, and then order his attendants to turn him out of the court again? Can we, also, in despite of this poverty, afford to support, at an immense expence, a barren Corfican mountain, whose soil is sterility, and the product of whose loyalty, or seeds of loyalty, it seems, are anarchy, and ambitious contention? Can we, I say, afford to do all this, at the expence of so many millions a year, and yet pretend that we cannot afford, notwithstanding all this convicted, (I was going to use a very hard word but I will only call it) prodigality in every branch and department of administration, to pay our labourers wages competent to their subsistence? Can our rulers, while thus overwhelming us with additional burdens, and then insulting us, by saying that our very defeats, disasters, and and disgraces, are reasons why we ought not to withdraw from a ridiculous crusade! Can our rulers, in the midst of all this, say, that to increase the wages of the poor is to destroy our trade and commerce? But under the present system I confess, it is impossible to ameliorate the condition of the lower orders. So long as rotten boroughs, and the system of rotten borough-mongering shall continue, I will be bold to say, that it is totally impossible for any amelioration of any class of the people, ex-



cept the higher classes to take place: and why, Citizens, let me ask you, under the present system? What is it that is so formidable that should prevent us from having any amelioration of our condition?

Citizens, this question is answered by another. Who make our laws and regulations? *Borough-mongers!* For whose benefit then may the laws and regulations be expected to be made? *For the benefit of the Borough-mongers!!!* Now who are the borough-mongers?

Citizens, it is in vain for corruption to make herself formidable; despicable vice will have the contempt of every thinking man, and corruption is the worst of vices! It is in vain then that these borough-mongers attempt to grasp, through the means of corruption, at the terrors that were intended only to protect the sovereign himself. It is in vain that they grasp at all power, consequence, and influence; that the sword of the nation is held by them in one hand, and the purse in the other. All this physical and political strength they may have, but they have no moral strength; and therefore it is impossible that they should command our veneration. Let them indict us for high treason to all eternity—our hearts will still rebel against this system of rotten-borough usurpation, and, instead of respecting will, expose them!

Who are those rotten borough-mongers then? They consist of two descriptions of men. The first and most respectable are the *great landed proprietors*. I say the most respectable—and I use the term in its proper and moral sense. The next are *political intriguers and parasites*; who by the basest prostitution to every successive administration, having amassed great property, choose to buy up seats in the House of Commons, whereas it stands recorded upon their own Journals, that “Seats are as regularly bought and sold as standings for cattle at a fair.”

These men buy seats in parliament as the best way of turning their ill-gotten property to advantage; and I could name you some of this description, who have, within these two years, bought up boroughs by the half score. In short we may expect to have them put up openly to auction by and by, and sold by the candle. I shall shew you that they are almost as bad already.

Well, then, these pimps and drudges of administration buy up these boroughs, in order to increase their grandeur and consequence. Some of them perhaps have names that  
they

they are ashamed of, and therefore want to buy *cant names*, that their proper ones may be forgotten; others wish to have an opportunity to increase the speculation they have carried on, and render themselves so formidable, that whoever becomes minister must give them a little *douceur* to keep them quiet. —Both these descriptions are men whom the minister must please: and how are they to be pleased? I believe you will find that the *respectables* and the *contemptibles*, though in some degree, in a different way, are both to be ruled by means hostile to the welfare of the people. The great landed proprietor must have such regulations made as will increase his rent-roll. Thus a bounty is to be offered for the exportation of corn, when below a certain par in price: by which means care is taken that it shall not continue under that price. By this virtuous measure the money is taken out of the people's pockets, that they may have the privilege of buying their bread so much the dearer. With the same view they also forbid the importation of foreign wheat unless English wheat is above a particular price. They are, also, to be encouraged in enclosures—I do not mean to say that enclosures are not good things, when carried on upon a just principle. I do not wish to see barren heaths, and a few wandering sheep here and there, with their fleeces torn by briars. I wish to see golden fertility smile throughout the country: and therefore enclosures are good. But how are they good? Not when they take away the right of the poor to increase the property of the rich. Let me tell you, no gentleman whatever be his estate, rank, or distinction, holds his estate by a better title than the poor people hold their right of commonage in the country. They are most of them granted by charters—perhaps from those who had no right to grant them: but do not let us be fond of starting such questions. By what title *John of Gaunt* held his estate, I shall not enquire: but when *John of Gaunt* bequeathed the right of commonage to the inhabitants of those districts where those commons lay, and their heirs for ever, he bequeathed them as valid a title as any freeholder can boast: every man therefore enclosing these commons, without the consent of the poor inhabitants, and without an equivalent to them and their posterity, commits a robbery upon the people; I care not by what authority it may be sanctioned.

But enclosures are snug things. They make an estate more valuable; and a minister must not quarrel with those



who have the power of sending two, four, six, or eight members to parliament; because, if he does, notwithstanding his virtue and his wisdom, a heaven-born minister would find himself in a minority; while, by an opposite conduct, a hell-born minister would be enabled to secure a majority.

Hence we have enclosures; hence, also, we have large farms: for when the peasantry and common people have no votes in the choice of representatives, can we be so absurd as to suppose any representative would stand up for regulations to prevent the monopoly of farms, although this monopoly entails misery upon the great body of the people.

Citizens, it is to be proved by a variety of authorities—and I particularly refer you to this book, which, on account of the valuable facts it contains, ought to be published at sixpence instead of half a guinea, and I can support it from my own knowledge,—that in a majority of parishes, where formerly you might find nine, twelve, fifteen, you will now find five, six or seven farms only: you will find the cottages pulled down: you will find several families huddled together in an old farm-house; and a large farm is engrossed by one man, who is a farmer only in name; but in effect a commercial speculator in an article which ought not to be permitted to be an object of speculative commerce in any country whatever; because by such speculations you starve people by millions. Hence also, forestalling and monopoly uplift their heads; and grave senators meet together, in sage debate, to repeal the laws made to repress those monopolists.

In the *Times* of this day, a paper equally to be celebrated for impudence and ignorance; and therefore a very proper instrument for the present administration—In the *Times* of to-day, we have two acts of parliament cited, the 5th and 6th of Edw. VI. together with a strong incitement to persons to turn informers upon those who violate those acts.

I shall not read the act quoted; it being, though made so early, encumbered with three times as many words as were necessary: for you know we have a great many lawyers in parliament; and it is to their interest to make such laws that nobody can understand them but themselves: Nay, they succeed better when they make such they cannot themselves understand; because then they can speak on both sides of the question, without danger of contradicting themselves. In this act it seems several provisions were made to prevent monopolies and forestalling;  
after

after quoting this act, the wise editors of the *Times* (O what wise times these are!) have these reflections—"As these offences are frequent throughout the kingdom, but particularly so with respect to corn and cattle sold in the London market; and as there is so much encouragement to any one who thinks proper to proceed on this most useful of all laws," (mark they acknowledge that this was the most useful of all laws) "and as carrying the act of 5 and 6 Edw. VI. into execution, would be attended with the blessings of all the poor, it is matter of astonishment that it is not more frequently enforced."

So says the wise Editor of the *Times*: but I happen to hold in my hand at this time an act of parliament made in the year 1772, which I believe was after the reign of Edw. VI.—at least I rather suppose so; but perhaps the *Times* know better. This act in January 1772, begins thus—"At the parliament begun and holden at Westminster the tenth day of May, Anno Domini 1768, in the eighth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord, George the Third, by the grace of God of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, king, Defender of the Faith, &c. and from thence continued by several prorogations to the 21st day of January 1772, being the fourth session of the thirteenth parliament of Great Britain." Well, how, is this act entitled?—"An act for repealing several laws therein mentioned against badgers, engrossers, forestallers, and regrators; and for indemnifying persons against prosecutions for offences committed against the said acts." Now, then, mark: I shall read the body of the act throughout, because I have been told (and I have not given myself the trouble to enquire whether it be true or not) that if a man prints an act of parliament, not being the king's printer, he is liable to be punished—I will not enquire whether this be true; because it seems impossible: but I will try whether a man be liable to punishment for making known what the laws are: for printed it shall be in the Tribune, I assure you.

"Whereas it has been found, by experience, that the restraints laid by statutes upon dealing in corn, meal, flour, cattle, and sundry other sorts of victuals, by preventing a free trade in the said commodities, have a tendency to discourage the growth, and to enhance  
" the



“ the price of the same; which statutes, if put in exe-  
 “ cution, would bring great distress upon the inhabitants  
 “ of many parts of this kingdom, and in particular upon  
 “ those of the cities of London and Westminster”—So  
 much for the *preamble*—that is to say, the *pretence*—the bu-  
 siness of which is, you know, always to put the best face  
 on the thing. “ Be it therefore enacted by the King’s  
 “ most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and con-  
 “ sent of the Lords Spiritual and temporal, and Com-  
 “ mons in this present Parliament assembled; and by the  
 “ authority of the same, That an act made in the 3d and  
 “ 4th year of King Edward VI. entitled, ‘ An act for  
 “ the buying and selling of butter and cheese’ and also  
 “ an act made in the 5th and 6th year of the reign of King  
 “ Edward VI. entitled, *An Act against regrators, forestallers*  
 “ *and engrossers*; and also an act made in the 3d year  
 “ of Philip and Mary, entitled, ‘ An Act for the keeping  
 “ of milch kine, and for the breeding and rearing of  
 “ calves;’ and also an act made in the 5th year of Queen  
 “ Elizabeth, entitled, ‘ An Act touching badgers of corn,  
 “ and drovers of cattle, to be licensed;’ and also an act  
 “ made in the 15th year of King Charles II. entitled, ‘ An  
 “ Act to prevent the selling of live fat cattle, by butchers,  
 “ and so much of an act made in the 5th year of Queen  
 “ Anne, entitled, ‘ An Act for continuing the laws  
 “ therein mentioned relating to the poor, and to the  
 “ buying and selling of cattle in *Smithfield*, and for sup-  
 “ pressing of piracy,’ as relates to butchers selling of  
 “ cattle alive or dead, within the cities of London and  
 “ Westminster, or within ten miles thereof; and all the acts  
 “ made for the better enforcement of the same, being de-  
 “ trimental to the supply of the labouring and manufactur-  
 “ ing poor of this kingdom, shall be, and the same are  
 “ hereby declared to be repealed.”

Now please to remember, that among these is the very  
 act quoted by the *Times*; and which is called by the  
 writers of that paper, a most wise and excellent act; and  
 the execution of which we are called upon to enforce.—  
 “ and be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,  
 “ that all informations, indictments, suits or prose-  
 “ cutions” (such as the *Times* recommend to be com-  
 menced) “ already commenced for the inflicting any pu-  
 “ nishment, or for the recovery of any fine, penalty or  
 for-

“forfeiture under the said former acts, or any of them, shall  
 “cease and determine, and no further proceedings shall be had  
 “thereupon; and that no information, indictment, suit or  
 “prosecution shall be commenced or prosecuted against any  
 “person or persons whatsoever, under or by virtue of the  
 “said acts or any of them; and that all such proceedings  
 “shall be void, and of no effect, any law, statute, or usage  
 “to the contrary, notwithstanding.”

And now, Citizens, I think you will see something of the degree of information possessed by those persons, supposed to be employed by the present administration, to enforce respect and obedience to the laws: who are calling upon their spies, informers, and magistrates to carry into effect these self same acts against monopolies and forestalling which by the act I have read to you have been repealed.

Now, Citizens, I shall proceed, in a very brief way, to the manner in which the second class of borough-mongers are to be dealt with. They are to be kept in good humour, with places, pensions, patronage, and the like: that is to say they are to fatten on the public plunder.

These are the abuses which swallow up the national revenue: and as those rewards, which must be conferred upon these borough-mongers to keep them in good humour, increase the taxes, this is another argument why we cannot afford to pay the labourers so much as would enable them to eat.

In fact, the conclusion is, that taxes are levied to buy up the borough-mongers, and then the borough-mongers vote for fresh taxes, to reward the Minister and his dependants in such a manner as to him, in his great wisdom, shall seem meet. Thus then it is, that by the system of borough-mongering—not by the vices of an individual, but the necessities which grow out of the system of corruption, proceeds this heavy weight which lies upon the shoulders of the people, and which has bowed them down to misery and misfortune, perpetually increasing, without any prospect of relief.

But if you want further proof I shall proceed to give it you. I think I shall be able to prove to you, in the first place, that the progress of taxation and the progress of corruption have always been commensurate, that as one has increased the other has increased also; which is to me some presumption, I think, in favour of the conclusion, that the system of enormous taxation grows out of the borough-mongering system. But I shall not stop here. I will leave presumption to the advocates of a presumptuous minister. They  
 stand



stand most in need of it. But I shall clearly shew you the way in which this corruption is made use of to increase this taxation. And I shall shew you also the manner in which that taxation is made use of to increase corruption; and by which alone corruption can be increased.

I am now obliged to proceed to a part of my subject which will make me, for a few minutes, perhaps, very dry and unentertaining. But I must claim your attention, because we must, first of all, have facts. If declaiming by the hour would answer the essential purpose of these Lectures, that I could do with much more ease, and perhaps much more applause than what I am now doing.

I shall now proceed to state from authentic documents, the growth of our national burdens. In 1685 the revenue of the government was 2,061,856l; the national debt nothing at all; and, of course, the interest nothing at all. But by and by we had a glorious revolution! and, in 1703, that is to say in 18 years afterwards, the assessed revenue, collected by government, amounted annually to 5,561,944l.; a national debt was contracted of 16,394,702; the annual interest of which was 1,310,942l. In 1753, that is to say fifty years after, the burden of the revenue was increased to 6,690,000l. the national debt to 74,571,840l. and the interest of it to 2,396,717l.

We proceed next to the close of 1760, which is seventeen years more. At this time we find the burden of the national revenue increased to £.7,101,067; the national debt increased to £.88,604,836; and the interest to £.2,445,360.

Now then, Citizens, let us pause a little while, and observe what are the conclusions from this statement of facts. The conclusions are these,—that in seventy-five years, from the end of Charles the Second, to the end of George the Second, the burden of the revenue had increased from two millions to seven; the debt from nothing to better than eighty-eight millions and a half; and the interest to two millions and an half. (Such was the increase for seventy-five years previous to the present reign.

I now come to speak of the reign of George the Third: and as this is consecrated ground, I shall tread it with consequent reverence and precaution. In three steps I have bounced over a space of seventy-five years. I shall now take slower and shorter strides. We find, according to the history of the first ten years of George the Third, published by Evans, Paternoster-Row, that in the first year of this reign, the supplies amounted to the enormous sum 19,616,119l. including a loan

loan of 12 million to be added to the national debt. I go then to the year 1775, that is to say, to the end of the space of 15 years, which is the longest stage I shall make during this part of the journey. In the space of 15 years we shall find a very disproportionable increase indeed: and I have the facts, in the "Case of the Labourers in Husbandry," and *Cunningham's* "History of the National Debt and Taxes," which will prove it. I shall not proceed to the formality of quoting every particular page. That would make the lecture more dull than even calculations themselves require.—But I shall briefly state, that in 15 years the annual burden increased from seven millions to ten; the national debt from 88 to near 136 millions; and the interest from about two millions and a half to about four millions and a half.

Such then, *Citizens*, was the increase during the first fifteen years. But snow-balls and taxes have an inevitable tendency to gather as they roll; and the larger they become, the greater is the growing accumulation collected in their passage. We will now see what are the additions made to this snow-ball in the next eleven years. From the year 1775 to 1786 is a memorable æra in the annals of taxation and finance.

In the year 1786, the collected revenue, that is to say, the annual burden upon the shoulders of the people, had amounted to near 14 millions and a half—the debt was swollen to upwards of 239 millions, and the interest to more than nine millions and a quarter.

*Citizens*, these calculations are dry work. We have but nine years more however to travel over; and of these we will make but a single stage.

In the beginning of this period commenced the famous project for paying off the national debt. I shall proceed to show you how the Minister has paid this; and how much posterity are indebted to him for the project. I find by Morgan's "Review of the Writings of Dr. Price," which I believe will be admitted as no mean authority, that in nine years, about 14 millions of 3 per cents. have been paid off; which do not amount to one 27th part of the aforementioned debt; or 9d in the pound upon the whole. In less than three years I find, also, that 70 millions of 3 per cents. have been added to that debt! So that



you have paid with one hand 14 millions, and borrowed 70 with the other. The upshot of which is, that we have paid the national debt in so excellent a way, that we are at this time 56 millions worse than when we began.

What then, Citizens, is the debt at this time, according to this calculation? Why, Citizens, the debt has decreased in such an Irish proportion, that it amounts to 295 millions of money: for which your labour, your faculties, your liberties—and the labour, faculties, and liberties of all your posterity, to the end of time, are pledged and mortgaged. The interest of the debt alone is about 11 millions annually; and the national burden, independent of poors' rates and other assessments of the respective parishes and districts, perhaps more than twenty.

Such are the blessed effects of this system of modern œconomy!

Let us now proceed to a slight recapitulation; and then bring our calculations home. You will remember, that in 75 years, from the end of the reign of *Charles the Second*, to the end of *George the Second*, a burden of two millions of taxes increased to seven. Now let us see what the proportion of increase has been during the last five and thirty years. Why in considerably less than half the time, the increase is nearly thrice as great; so that the progress of this fatal accumulation is in reality at this time increased and increasing in a proportion of more than six to one, in comparison with any former period. And how is this? Why Citizens, the rage of corruption has increased. Successive combinations of bad ministers have reduced this corruption to a system, which has been supported by the system of borough-mongering, unfortunately grown and spread to so enormous a degree during the present reign: a growth, remember, which I attributed not to the King but to his Ministers. Upon their heads the constitution of the country has placed the responsibility of all vicious measures: and though I am not for sanguinary responsibility, I am for the responsibility of reason and justice; and I am for resting that responsibility where the constitution has placed it.

At the bar of their country then I consider those ministers as standing, and careless of the abusive witticisms of their hirelings, who may nickname me the *Public Accuser*,

*tiser*, thus publicly I do accuse them of increasing the national debt, in the space of 35 years, from 88 millions and a half to 295 millions; I do accuse them of having increased the annual burden, in the same space of time, considerably more than fourfold; the annual interest alone of this national debt, which in 1760, was less than two millions and a half, amounting at this time to eleven millions!

Citizens, I am sorry that with respect to the whole collected revenue, I am not in possession of facts to state the growth with sufficient accuracy. I shall not insult you with any gross conjectures: and it would be strange, indeed, if I had not some imperfections of this kind occasionally to confess, when it is considered how fast these Lectures tread one upon the heel of another. But from this work of William Morgan, which I cited to you before, I find that there is good reason to conclude, that were peace to be immediately made, the ordinary expenditure even upon the peace establishment, would be at least 20 millions per year. I refer you to the 14th page of his "Appendix," to the "Review of the Writings of Dr. Price;" as you will find in that very valuable pamphlet, materials for very important reflection.

If such would be the national burden if we were to have an immediate peace, what are we to expect if our most rash and frantic minister, should haughtily and obstinately persevere in this ridiculous crusade. And are there not reasons to suppose he has taken such a determination? Is it not rumoured abroad that 30 millions\* are to be borrowed, to enable him to carry on another campaign? 30,000,000*l.* more of British gold are to be expended in hiring massacre and desolation in that country which, endeavouring to emancipate itself from a horrible tyranny, has sometimes fallen into temporary and disgraceful excesses, but which has been uniformly pursuing the most noble object—the annihilation of despotism.—Excesses which would disgrace the name of liberty, if common sense did not shew us they were perpetrated, not in prosecution, but in defence of those principles of liberty which men have been called upon to revere! excesses, which, though they have thrown a cloud over, cannot extinguish those glorious principles which the champions of the French revolution have propagated! Principles

\* This has dropped down to 18 for the present.



which have so diffused the light of political enquiry that I feel no difficulty in pronouncing, whatever treason there may be in the declaration, that the universe, so long as the universe exists, will be benefited by their emanating radiance. Yet with this nation we are to refuse to treat, and Citizen *Monneron*, who has arrived at *Dover*, has been refused, we are told, to be conducted to *London*.

From the very height of power and conquest, in the full tide of victory, the injured, the generous Republic of France stoops to her enemies—respecting the independence of other nations, and pitying the sufferings of her own brave people, she offers you the hand of friendship. But a minister, whose only pretensions to wisdom are derived from low cunning and chicanery, and whose only grandeur consists in imperious stiffness and hauteur—this minister, goading and driving a trampled and harassed people, whom he ought to protect, spurns the proffered boon of returning tranquillity. No, says he, “the piping days of peace” shall not return—the “Dogs of War” shall yet be glutted with increasing carnage; and savage desolation shall stalk still longer over afflicted Europe.

Having said thus much of our national burdens, let us now proceed to the question of ministerial corruption.—And here the important question for my present purpose is—Is it—or is it not true, that the corruption has kept pace with the burdens that have been laid upon the people? Citizens I remember, in some book which impressed itself upon my mind as an authority, at the time, though I have not been able to recal it to my memory, to have met with an instance of a Sheriff having been fined for accepting some trifling sum, 5*l.* I believe, as a boon for returning a candidate to parliament. How far 5*l.* or 25*l.* will go now we know very well towards the price of a seat in the House of Commons. From four to six thousand pounds is now, I believe, a general price for that proportion of a wooden form which can be covered with the broad end of a member of parliament.

How charming a thing it must be to have a grove for one's estate, from which planks of this kind might be sawed! A piece of wood covered with a bit of green leather worth 5 or 6,000*l.*! one would suppose a man might have a good easy elbow-chair for something less!

But

But the truth is, that some seats are like Fortunatus's wishing cap,—and upon the mere repetition of a few cabalistic terms, bring golden showers into the laps of their proprietors, without the toils of industry, or the difficult attainments of desert.

In short, these immense premiums must be somehow or other repaid. Poor John Bull must labour and toil, must plough and weave for them; his burdens must be increased to support this increasing corruption.

But this is not all, the growth of corruption does not only appear in its enormity: corruption is a lady who has not only grown from a child to a giant, but she has also grown from a modest maid, blushing behind the door, to an open prostitute, proud of the public sale of her favours.

In a newspaper, which I now hold in my hand, we have an advertisement, which I understand has also made its appearance in the *Times* and *Herald*, of a very curious nature indeed.

No great while ago, some little delicacy was observed about these things; and an auctioneer, we are told, in the midst of the flowers of his rhetoric, selling a certain little snug estate, in order to enhance the price, reminded the bidders, that in addition to other advantages, the property under his hammer had the recommendation of a very delicate contingency; which when it came to be privately enquired into was found to be no other than two seats in the House of Commons. But these contingencies are delicate no more: we have now open advertisements in the public papers, which offer these contingencies to sale without reserve.

“*Telegraphe, Friday Sept. 25.*”

#### “DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT.”

“WHOEVER wishes for a seat in the House, by honourable and constitutional means,” now, Citizens, are those *constitutional means*, the means of the *constitution established at the glorious revolution*, or are they the means of that constitution to which Messrs. *Burke, Windham and Pitt*, pay such fine compliments—knowing that they could not have any other constitution under which *they* could expect so many good things.—“Whoever wishes for a seat in the House, &c. “may have the choice of many, where their success can be made certain.—Address a line to Mr. B. No. 11, *Down-Street*,”



"street," (not *Downing-street, Westminster* but "*Down-street, Piccadilly*.) None but principals need apply."

Pretty plain this. But even that is modest to what I am going to read. In the *Courier*, Sept. 3, we meet again with the same Mr. B. B stands for a great many things you know: and men who sell stolen goods are sometimes called by a name that begins with B. ["Members of Parliament."] "The present system of electioneering is attended with great evils, among which the following are not the least—much trouble, heavy expence, and great uncertainty of success."

These he says are not among the least. Now I think they are the least. I think the largest are these, the barefaced insult which is offered to the dignity and character of Englishmen, and the degeneracy of morals and manners which the system of open prostitution and corruption produces in the hearts and characters of the people. "The advertiser knows how to obtain seats in the house without difficulty. His plan is infallible, and perfectly constitutional. None but principals can be treated with."—Right! when men are to transact business in which there is no principle at all, none but the principal ought to be trusted; and they had best meet in as dark and secret a way as they can. In such cases better that the two parties prostitute themselves in person, than that they should have agents and go-betweens to be prostituted also. "Address a line to Mr. B. No. 11, *Down-street, Piccadilly*."

Such, Citizens, are the advances of corruption with respect to the open manner in which it is now practiced. Yet these *honourable gentlemen*, who may thus procure to themselves seats by purchase, after this public advertisement, will perhaps talk of the duty of the people of submitting with veneration and silent awe to the mandates of the representatives of the nation, in the Commons House of Parliament assembled; and, at some future time, may prefer indictments for High Treason against those who shall dare to oppose measures in their contemplation.

This is sufficient proof of the growth of corruption; but there are circumstances that prove the intimate manner in which corruption and taxation are united, which demand our particular attention. I shall mention, however, but one fact at present; with which I shall conclude this lecture. This fact will shew the manner in which these two things are very curiously united together: how the burdens, laid upon the  
shoulders

shoulders of the people, increase the ease and facility of conducting those bargains to which the borough-mongering system gives rise.

You know, Citizens, that there is a corporation called *Chichester*; and that in the neighbourhood of this corporation a most noble Duke resides, at a place called *Goodwood*, where a very splendid palace is built for the use of his dogs.

In that part of the country, as well as many others, commotions took place, during last summer, in consequence of the distresses of the laborious orders of the community. Associations of consequence were formed; and a proposal was made for voluntary subscriptions, to enable the mass of the people round about to procure bread at a cheaper rate. But, no, says the Duke, your humanity may be a very good thing, but at this rate the rich will be expected to bear the whole burden of this contribution. Cannot we devise some means by which we can shift it from our shoulders? Certainly; and by that means find a way of lessening the voters in the town; and thus be enabled to dispose of our snug borough with more convenience to ourselves.

What was the consequence? The printed document is upstairs in my study. I could not find it, or I would have brought it to you. A meeting was held at *Goodwood*; and a resolution adopted, by which a regular rate was to be levied upon the people. Now we know when a regular rate is levied the consequence is, that the heaviest weight falls upon the middle orders; and the *Corinthian pillar* of polished society just touches the corner of the burden. This is not all. The persons receiving the benefit of it were to have their names registered, as having taken relief from the parish; and the consequence was, that they were disqualified for voting at the next election. Thus were the distresses of the people, by this wise plan of shifting the burthen off the shoulders of the rich, productive of an excellent expedient for diminishing the number of voters, and *purifying* the representation of the people from the *atrocious sans-culottism* that might result from the *swinish multitude* having any choice in their representatives.

But there are other connections, close and intimate indeed, between national burdens and borough-mongering corruptions. Connections that will go hand in hand to the destruction of the country, and even to the destruction of the men themselves who are carrying on this system, unless timely  
and



and temperate reform snatches us from the dreadful precipice upon which we stand.

But upon these it is too late to enter to-night. Let me, therefore now dismiss you, for the present, with a serious invocation to take nothing for granted that I have said; but to examine yourselves into the truth of my facts; and to draw your own conclusions. If they should be, that I have mis-stated these things, then let me no more have your countenance and applause. But if my premises and conclusions are true and just, consult your own bosoms, and meditate in your closets upon the means by which we may restore the purity of our representation. To me it appears the best way to proceed, is according to that plan and system which the Duke of Richmond, in better days, laid down for emancipating us from these increasing burdens which must else "cover us like rising floods, and press us like a weight of water down," even to the very abyss of national perdition!

[END OF VOL. II.]

30 MR 64

A Supplementary Number, containing Title, Preface, Contents, &c. will be published in the course of next week.

# JOHN GILPIN'S GHOST;

OR,

THE WARNING VOICE

OF

## KING CHANTICLEER:

AN

*HISTORICAL BALLAD:*

WRITTEN BEFORE THE LATE TRIALS,

AND DEDICATED TO THE

### TREASON-HUNTERS

*OF OAKHAM.*

---

BY J. THELWALL.

---

Rifum teneatis amici?

HOR.

---

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

And published by T. SMITH, at the Sign of the POP-GUN,  
Corner of Portsmouth-Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

1795.

[PRICE SIX-PENCE.]



JOHN CHAPIN GHOST



## PREFACE.

---

GOOD wine, says the proverb, requires no bush ; and good poetry, it is said by the critics, should require no notes. But when a tavern is opened in a new situation, it may be necessary to hang out a sign ; and when poetry is written upon a local subject, it may not be amiss to say a few explanatory words by way of preface.

This little Ballad will not, however, require much introduction ; especially to those who are acquainted with the inquisitorial proceedings of the last two or three years. The occasion of it is simply as follows—An extract from a speech delivered by me at a debating society, having been printed by Eaton, in his *Politics for the People*, under the title of *King Chanticleer, or the Fate of Tyranny*, that intrepid bookseller was, in consequence, a third time indicted for sedition, and, as the public well knows, was a third time acquitted. Shortly after which, I took an opportunity of sending, by a passenger in the *Stamford* stage, a small packet of books to a brother-in-law who resides in *Oakham*, the county-town of *Rutland*, containing, among other articles, some copies of this ludicrous story, and of the still more ludicrous indictment to which it had given birth. But a conspiracy to intercept my papers had been formed by the *great men* of *Oakham* (particularly Mr. *John Combes*, attorney at law, and agent to Lord *Winchelsea* ; the Rev. Mr. *Williams*, who afterwards displayed the critical accuracy of his optics by swearing to my *T*'s and *h*'s, in consequence of having seen me sign my name to the register of my marriage, and Mr. *Apothecary Berry*, who swore he would sell his whole estate



estate but he would hang me!) and these books, by some accident or other (being left at *Biggleswade*, the place where the passengers stop to change coaches) fell into *Combes's* hand. The *Oakhamites* were in consequence all in a flame. Nightly meetings were held at "*the Crown*," which is the principal inn at Oakham; the house of my brother-in-law was broke open, and rifled of papers, books, letters, &c. and lawyer *Combes* was posted to London to acquaint the GREAT MAN in DOWNING-STREET with the wonderful discovery.

These particulars gave rise to the following ballad, which was written before the late arrests for High Treason. The copy being in the pocket of an old waistcoat, escaped the general pillage; and has therefore the fortune, good or bad, which I must never expect for any other of the manuscripts written before that time, of coming before the public. It may perhaps excite an innocent laugh at the expence of those who have laboured so ridiculously hard—to make me and my connections, according to the old adage, "laugh on the wrong side of "our mouths."

With respect to the fiction of *Gilpin's Ghost*, introduced for the sake of machinery, it is perhaps an act of justice due even to an enemy to declare, that it means no reflection upon the birth or family of *Combes*, about which I neither know nor care any thing whatever. Add to which, that I despise birth and family too much to make any circumstance of that kind an object of satire. I know no difference between legitimate and illegitimate—noble or simple—the republic of letters acknowledges no distinctions but between vice and virtue, wisdom and stupidity. But the conceit about *John Gilpin* having struck my imagination, the fabulous anecdote about *Fetter-Lane* became indispensable, to connect the machinery with the historical parts of the ballad. 30 MR 64

*Beaufort-Buildings,*  
28:b Sept. 1795.

# JOHN GILPIN'S GHOST;

OR, THE  
WARNING VOICE

OF  
KING CHANTICLEER.

---

## PART I.

---

YE men of Oakham, one and all,  
So valiant and so witty,  
Of late for treason all agog,  
Attend unto my ditty :

A ditty which the bard I ween  
In pillory may rue ;  
For it a *libel* must be deem'd—  
Since ev'ry word is true.

I'll shew how *Johnny Gilpin's* ghost  
His dearest son awoke ;  
And how that son thro' darkling air,  
A wond'rous journey took ;

And how the *Lords of Oakham's town*,—  
All men of high degree,  
Apothecaries, men of law,  
And those that 'squires be !—

B

How



How these, and such like gallant men  
 Assembled at the *Crown*,  
 Left *Sans-Culottes*, with pop-guns arm'd,  
 Should beat the Sign-post down.

That Sign-post which so long has stood,  
 The wonder of each lout,  
 Till with seditious paper balls,  
*Tom Paine* kick'd up a rout.

(Since when, ah woe! ah well-a-day!  
 How *fool'scap* has abounded!)  
 And crowns, and mitres eke to boot,  
 And sign-post Dukes confounded.

Then wonder not, ye *Oakham* men,  
 Nor scratch your heads to know  
 Why those who gaudy sign-posts love  
 Should with such fury glow.

But listen to the tale I tell,  
 Nor let a word be lost,  
 How Lawyer Combes was lately wak'd  
 By Johnny Gilpin's ghost.

'Twas at the solemn hour of night,  
 When all lay still in bed;—  
 Except the Swinish Multitude,  
 Who grunt for want of bread—

For bellies full, as doctors know,  
 Dispose us men to sleep,  
 While gnawing hunger oft is found  
 The eyes agog to keep.

'Twas

'Twas at that hour, when doctors grave,  
And keen attornies too,  
Their ruin'd clients, in their dreams,  
And murder'd patients view,

When *Gilpin*, in his winding sheet,  
At Combes's feet did stand :  
"Awake," he said, "thou man of law !"  
And wav'd his shadowy hand.

"Ah !" who art thou ?" the lawyer cried,  
All as the spectre pale ;—  
"Some client, sure, who gain'd his suit,  
"But died for costs in jail !

"Or some poor famish'd wretch I ween,  
"Compell'd the town to flee,  
"Because he could not stand a suit  
"Against my Lord and me.

"And must I issue join, so soon,  
"Before the courts above,  
"From which no writ of error I  
"Can ever hope to move ?"

"Not so, my son," with solemn voice  
The spectre made reply ;  
"No tipstaff stern, from heav'n dispatch'd  
"With special *capias* I,

"Nor yet, I ween, for thee array'd  
"The winged jurors stand,  
"Nor God Almighty's Clerk in Court  
"Yet bids "*hold up thy hand.*"

But



" But here thy loving father stands,  
" Thy father all so kind,  
" Who rode so fast through Edmonton  
" And left his wig behind.

" That father who, one night in cups,  
" To loving spouse untrue,  
" Was led astray up *Fetter-lane*,  
" And blest'd the world with you.

" From Mistress Gilpin's jealous eye  
" I kept thee close conceal'd;  
" And, pleas'd to see the thriving hopes  
" Thy early youth reveal'd,

" I put thee to a man of law,  
" In hopes to make thee great;  
" And since, alike alive or dead,  
" Have watch'd thy growing state.

" And now a tale I come to tell,  
" If ghosts can read aright,  
" Shall make thee dear to *Billy Pitt*,  
" And great as *Joey White* :

" That *Billy Pitt*, and *Joey White*,  
" The people's joint salvation !  
" Who all the *cash*, and all the *spies*,  
" Command throughout the nation.

" For, know, from London's wicked town,  
" To mar your blest'd condition,  
" A dreadful lot is on the road  
" Of TREASON and SEDITION !!!

" All

" All from a wicked wight it comes,  
" Who gives in London Lectures,  
" And fills the heads of common folks  
" With strange and new conjectures.

" He tells them, *common folks are men,*  
" *And should like men be treated ;*  
" *Nor, like a swinish multitude,*  
" *By wealthy knaves be cheated.*

" He tells them, too, 'tis very hard  
" *On them and all their neighbors,*  
" *That Lords, and Dukes, and Kings, should eat*  
" *The profit of their labors :*

" *Or that they should be tax'd and tax'd*  
" *(Which he to prove is willing)"*  
" *Till for two-pennyworth of bread*  
" *They're forc'd to pay a shilling !*

" Ye priests and lawyers, how your pride  
" Must soon come tumbling down  
" Should e'er these *new French principles*  
" Arrive in *Oakham town !*

" Then haste, my son ; arise, with me  
" To *Biggleswade* repair,  
" Ere yet my shadowy essence melt  
" Before the morning air."

He said, and seiz'd him in his arms,  
Nor for an answer stopp'd ;  
And Lawyer *Combes*, by *Gilpin's* ghost,  
At *Biggleswade* was dropp'd.

The



The morning breaks, the coach arrives,  
 The lawyer pricks his ears,  
 Ransacks the basket, boot, and seats,  
 But not a book appears.

Then did he rave and stamp, and forth  
 A special capias draw;  
 And swear against his father's ghost  
 He'd bring a suit at law.

While thus despairing, round he star'd,  
 And search'd on every side,  
 Beneath an old dame's petticoats  
 He something strange espied.

" 'Tis here, 'tis here; I have it fast,"  
 With eager joy he cried—  
 " 'Tis here, 'tis here," the echoing walls  
 Of *Biggleswade* replied.

The promis'd prize, with trembling hand,  
 He drew from its retreat;  
 Then back return'd to *Oakham* town  
 Upon a courser fleet.

And all the while as he did ride,  
 He counted on the gains,  
 Which *Oakham's* sapient *Gothamites*  
 Would give him for his pains.

And to himself he thus did say—  
 " I'll next to court, I vow,  
 " And to the mighty *Billy Pitt*  
 " Will make my humble bow.

" Who

"Who knows but, when this feat is told,

"Great *Pitt* may deign to smile;

"And with a little *finecure*

"Reward my faithful toil.

"Or, should the Inquisition want

"Another helping hand,

"Why should not *Combes's* humble name

"With *White's* aspire to stand?"

END OF PART FIRST.



# JOHN GILPIN'S GHOST,

&c.

## PART II.

---

NOW to the *Crown* with one consent  
All *Oakham*'s heroes fly,  
Resolv'd the Sign-post to defend,  
Or in the conflict die:

For Fame, upon the market cross,  
Did tell the wond'rous tale  
Of Lawyer *Combes* and *Gilpin*'s ghost,  
All as the ashes pale.

First, blustering *Berry* came, renown'd  
For bolus, draught, and blister,  
And from sedition vow'd to purge  
All *Oakham* with a clyster.

Next, *Williams*, trembling for his tithes,  
His royal zeal display'd.  
He rose; he flew; nor even stopp'd  
To kiss his buxom maid.

No

No more he pants to greenland shade  
 And bushy brake to run,  
 And at his fav'rite *Woodcock* there  
 To point his carnal gun——

That *Woodcock* as a partridge plump—  
 Tho' slanderous laymen clatter,  
 What priest might not at such a bird  
 Permit his mouth to water?

But now at other game he flies,  
 With loyal zeal so warm,  
 With maudling *Haley* by his side,  
 And flagellation *Orme*.

This goodly trinity of priests  
 (Three persons, one in mind!)  
 Ran to the Crown, in pious hope  
 A Mitre there to find.

And there full many a loyal wight,  
 With motives just as pure,  
 They also met, resolv'd to make  
 Their loaves and fishes sure.

Says *Williams*, "In the book 'tis said,  
 "As all divines agree,  
 "*The Swinish Multitude must crouch*  
 "*Before the pow'rs that be.*

"These pow'rs that be, if right I read,  
 "Are King, Lord, Placeman, Priest,  
 "Who by this rule are privileg'd  
 "On others' toil to feast.

C

" And



"And right it is; for, should the herd  
"Have all their labour brings,  
"They'd live as well as priests themselves,  
"And grow as wise as kings.

"Then Church and State, in wedlock join'd,  
"Should awe the world no more;  
"Nor crowns nor mitres longer swing  
"At every ale-house door."

He spoke; with awe the prostrate crowd  
Their oracle rever'd;  
And once, at least, in all his life,  
His congregation *heard*;

For *Balaam's* stick was hung aloft,  
As once in days of yore,  
And open forc'd that mumbling mouth,  
Which never op'd before.

And now, from *Biggleswade* return'd,  
Came *lawyer Combes* in haste,  
And all before their haggard eyes  
The fearful packet plac'd.

'Tis op'd, with many a mutter'd spell  
To bless the *Crown* from harm,  
And keep them all (God speed the pray'r!)  
From vile Sedition's charm.

When lo! a feather'd hero bounc'd,  
A mangled sight, to view,  
And stretch'd his headless neck and cried  
"Cock—cock-a-doodle-doo!"

And

And still he spurn'd and flapp'd his wings,  
And shook his spurs of steel,  
While trembling joints and haggard looks,  
The council's fears reveal.

For thus prophetic flow'd the strain  
That pierc'd each wond'ring ear,  
While priests o'er tythe-pigs, fees and dues,  
Bequeath'd the parting tear.

" Ah, well, ye servile crew, may ye  
" My clarion shrill bewail,  
" Whose scream ill-omen'd but forebodes  
" A more disastrous tale.

" My crowing speaks the envious light  
" That soon must clear the sky;  
" For *kingcraft's, priestcraft's night* is past,  
" And *Reason's dawn* is nigh.

" In me behold the fate to which  
" All tyranny must bow,  
" And those who've long oppress'd the poor  
" Shall be as I am now."

He spoke—they would have stopp'd his voice,  
And kept him close confin'd;  
But ah! he 'scap'd their anxious care,  
As flits impassive wind.

And still he stalks abroad, the fate  
Of tyrants to display;  
Nor can the *Attorney General's self*  
The headless spectre lay.





And still he turned and flung his wings  
And took his leave of us  
While trembling hearts and haggard looks  
The countenance of the crowd

For thus passed the flow of the stream  
That parted each wondering eye  
While the crowd of the people and the  
Heavenly light of the morning

" Ah, well, we'll see you crew, my boys  
" My dear friends, I'll be with you  
" Whole hearts are in it, but for the  
" A more glorious life

" My crowing speaks the entire night  
" That you shall clear the sky  
" For the night is bright and light is full  
" And the night is full of light

" It is the light of the day to which  
" All things must bow  
" And now we've just opened the door  
" Shall we not see now

" Hope, that would have been his voice  
" And the light of the day  
" The light of the day is full of light  
" As the light of the day

" And still he turned and flung his wings  
" Of the light of the day  
" The light of the day is full of light  
" As the light of the day

